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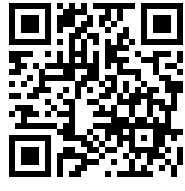

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THE QUEEN'S BAYS

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A HISTORY OF THE QUEEN'S BAYS

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2ND DRAGOON GUARDS, QUEEN'S BAYS, 1812

From the painting by Harry Payne, now in possession of the Regiment

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A HISTORY of THE QUEEN'S BAYS

(THE 2ND DRAGOON GUARDS)

1685 ... 1929

BY
FREDERIC WHYTE
AND
A. HILLIARD ATTERIDGE

FROM MATERIAL COLLECTED BY
MAJOR H. W. HALL, M.C.

WITH A FOREWORD
BY
FIELD-MARSHAL VISCOUNT ALLENBY, G.C.B.

WITH 42 MAPS AND PLANS PREPARED BY
A. HILLIARD ATTERIDGE

JONATHAN CAPE
THIRTY BEDFORD SQUARE LONDON
1930

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FOREWORD

I AM honoured in being invited by Sir Hew Fanshawe to write a Foreword to the *History of the Queen's Bays*; a Regiment which I have known for many years, in peace and war.

The compilers have produced a really valuable work. They have given us a regimental history of absorbing interest, and a true and vivid record of the great events which went to the making of that history.

Raised in 1685, the 2nd (Queen's) Dragoon Guards – who had from early days been mounted on bay horses – became, in the year 1870, officially the Queen's Bays. The Regiment had, during its long career, seen much and varied service; and it bore then – as now – a reputation second to none.

Subsequently to 1870, the Bays had two periods of service in India, were two years in Egypt, and saw active service in South Africa during the Boer War in 1901–1902.

In South Africa the regiment came in for much hard work and hard fighting, receiving well-earned rewards for 'gallantry and capacity in action.' After the close of hostilities, it stayed in the country to complete its tour of foreign service; returning to England in 1908.

In his farewell order to the regiment when it quitted South Africa, the Commander-in-Chief used the following words: 'The conduct of the 2nd Dragoon Guards (Queen's Bays) has been irreproachable in action, on trek and in camp.'

The outbreak of war, in August 1914, found the Bays at Aldershot, where they formed part of the 1st Cavalry Brigade. With that brigade, they left for France; and they

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arrived at Maubeuge on the 19th August. Thenceforward, until victory crowned our arms, the Bays were in the thick of the fighting.

On the 23rd of August began the Battle of Mons. The events of that battle and the retreat which ensued are given in clear detail. A fine picture is drawn of the stand near Le Cateau; and the narrative carries us on, past Compiègne to Néry.

Néry was reached at dusk on the 31st August. There, in the misty dawn of the 1st September, a German shell burst in the horse lines of the Bays. This was the first missile of a battle small in extent but fraught with heroism to a degree unsurpassed in the annals of the British cavalry.

Norman Champion de Crespigny, Lamb and his seven machine gunners – all belonging to the Queen's Bays; Bradbury, Dobell and Nelson, of 'L' Battery, Royal Horse Artillery; are names of a few among those who bravely withstood and at great cost defeated – with the loss of all its guns – the 4th German Cavalry Division.

On Sunday, the 6th September, at Aubepierre, beyond the Marne, the tide turned. At 4 a.m. on the 7th September, there was a start 'now North-Eastward.' The enemy was retiring.

Then forward, to the Aisne; reached, after a march full of exciting incidents, on the 13th September; and there followed the three fateful weeks which virtually decided the war.

The fall of Antwerp with the consequent threat to Lille and the Channel Ports, brought about the transfer of the British Expeditionary Force to the north-west; our troops being replaced on the Aisne by the French. The relief began on the 3rd August.

The Bays marched by Néry – their old battleground – Montdidier, Doullens, St. Pol; meeting and driving back

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hostile cavalry about Merville; and on to Messines, where the Cavalry Division saw for the next few weeks some of the fiercest fighting in the war.

The German attack at the end of October is eloquently described; and the Regiment had little rest or ease throughout the long course of the first battle of Ypres.

With the termination of that battle, trench warfare may be said to have commenced; but – in our authors' words – the cavalry were still able, 'when the occasion required, to lift their eyes to the horizon, and to think again at fifteen miles an hour.'

Chapter XVIII, dealing with trench warfare, is as interesting as any novel that has been written on the Great War.

The first winter passed. With April came the whiff of gas which heralded the second battle of Ypres.

Our Cavalry were busy throughout this battle; and showed splendid valour, in support of the Fifth Army Corps, during the fierce fighting which filled the month of May. The Bays were unceasingly engaged; and their dogged resistance on the day of the final gas attack, the 23rd May, was largely instrumental in saving a precarious situation.

After May, the Regiment had a somewhat easier spell; but there was no idle repose, and it was busily occupied in preparation for further enterprise.

In 1916 it fought in the great battle of the Somme; and, in 1917, took its full share of the bitter fighting east of Arras. The doings of the Queen's Bays in both battles are well and fully told.

Shortly after the battle of Arras, my connexion with the Western Theatre of War came to an end, and I saw no more of the gallant Regiment; but I have read with keen interest the account of its later exploits set out in this History.

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FOREWORD

The Bays took part in the battles fought on the Ypres front in 1917; they shared in the victory of Cambrai; they stemmed the German onslaught in the spring of 1918; they joined in the final victorious advance.

On the 29th March 1919, 'some sixty strong,' they sailed for home. By June of that year, the Regiment was its old self again.

Then came 'a bolt from the blue'; and, on the 4th June, the Bays embarked for Palestine.

Palestine, Syria, Transjordania had become familiar to them, when, on November 1920, they were sent to India, where they served until their return to England in 1927.

The Queen's Bays are rightly proud of their long and glorious record; and they are fortunate, in this era of change, that the Regiment still survives as an independent unit under its old name.

ALLENBY, F. M.

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PREFATORY NOTE

As no written account of the services rendered by the Queen's Bays during the Great War, 1914–1918, was in existence, and as it seemed likely that owing to political circumstances the Regiment might very easily lose its identity through amalgamation, in 1927 I asked Mr. Frederic Whyte if he would undertake to write a History of the Regiment. This he consented to do, and later co-opted Mr. A. Hilliard Atteridge, with the very valuable result herewith. After talking matters over with Lieut.-General Sir Hew Fanshawe, the Colonel of the Regiment, and other senior officers, we decided to extend the scope of the work to include the whole history of the Regiment from its formation to the present time.

The best thanks of the authors and myself is due for the great help that many officers, past and present, have given to us, both in lending diaries, accounts, etc., and in reading proofs.

The photographic illustrations are from official photographs of the Great War—photos taken by General Dewar, Major Hall, Captain Sampson, Gale & Polden.

Among many others, our thanks are due to Lady Seymour, for loan of General Seymour's letters, etc.; Lieut.-General Sir Hew Fanshawe; Major-General Mullens, for loan of the Townshend letters; Captain Paul, for loan of Townshend letters; Brig.-General Dewar, diary of South African War; Brig.-General Ward, diary of South African War; diaries of Great War of Brig.-General Sir Herbert

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Wilberforce, Majors Hall and Lamb, and Captain Newton. Accounts written by Captains Kingstone, Barnard, Newton, Milnes, Smith, Higgins, Magnay, Knight, Bushell, and Chancellor. Also to Mr. G. A. Brennan for expert advice as to uniforms and the use of his portfolio of coloured plates. If the interest and help of the above and many others, and the skill of the authors, has added further lustre to the Queen's Bays, I am well repaid.

H. W. HALL, *Major*

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CHAPTER I

Introductory – The Formation of the Regiment – Service at Home, 1685–9

Through all the centuries, from the time of the Roman occupation down to the accession of the Tudors, there had been no permanent army, no 'standing' army, in the British Isles. Under the Tudors 'trained bands' came into existence in the city of London and in the counties, and the Honourable Artillery Company, the oldest organised unit of our military forces of to-day, dates from the same period. We do not, indeed, hear of the creation of mercenary armies of professional soldiers anywhere in Europe until after the invention of gunpowder – an invention which played no small part in the coming of absolute government in the Europe of the sixteenth century. For trained bodies of musketeers and pikemen could easily break up improvised levies of feudal retainers or armed peasants, while the baron could not hold his castle, nor could the city long defend itself, against trains of battering cannon. The sixteenth century saw the introduction of standing armies in Spain and France. Had our James I. been a man of romantic and ambitious type, our own standing Army would doubtless have begun its history in his reign. Macaulay's well-known sentences conjure up for us vividly that 'might have been'! The passage is worth quoting in full as a sort of preface to this history:

'Of James the First, as of John, it may be said that if his administration had been able and splendid, it would probably have been fatal to our country, and that we owe more to his weaknesses and meannesses than to the wisdom and courage of much better sovereigns. He came to the throne at a

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critical moment. The time was fast approaching when either the King must become absolute or the Parliament must control the whole executive administration. Had he been like Henry the Fourth, like Maurice of Nassau, or like Gustavus Adolphus, a valiant, active and politic ruler, had he put himself at the head of the Protestants of Europe, had he gained great victories over Tilly and Spinola, had he adorned Westminster with the spoils of Bavarian monasteries and Flemish cathedrals, had he hung Austrian and Castilian banners in St. Paul's, and had he found himself, after great achievements, at the head of fifty thousand troops, brave, well-disciplined and devotedly attached to his person, the English Parliament would soon have been nothing more than a name. Happily he was not a man to play such a part. He began his administration by putting an end to the war which had raged during many years between England and Spain; and from that time he shunned hostilities with a caution which was proof against the insults of his neighbours and the clamours of his subjects. Not till the last year of his life could the influence of his son, his favourite, his Parliament and his people combined, induce him to strike one feeble blow in defence of his family and his religion. It was well for those whom he governed that he in this matter disregarded their wishes. The effect of his pacific policy was that in his time no regular troops were needed, and that while France, Spain, Italy, Belgium and Germany swarmed with mercenary soldiers, the defence of our island was still confined to the militia.'[1]

But James was the James whom we know, and England was not to have a regular army until Cromwell instituted

[1]Macaulay's *History of England*, vol. i. Sir John Fortescue, the historian of the British Army, who is more of a militarist than Macaulay was, adopts a notably different attitude towards the peace policy of James.

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his 'New Model.' Another characteristic page or two from Macaulay will enable us to appreciate the full measure of Cromwell's achievement. When Cromwell first took the field, Macaulay reminds us, his forces were no match for those of Charles:

'Both armies, it is true, were almost entirely composed of men who had never seen a field of battle. Nevertheless the difference was great. The parliamentary ranks were filled with hirelings whom want and idleness had induced to enlist. Hampden's regiment was regarded as one of the best; and even Hampden's regiment was described by Cromwell as a mere rabble of tapsters and serving-men out of place. The royal army, on the other hand, consisted in great part of gentlemen, high spirited, ardent, accustomed to consider dishonour as more terrible than death, accustomed to fencing, to the use of firearms, to bold riding and to manly and perilous sport, which has been well called the image of war. Such gentlemen, mounted on their favourite horses, and commanding little bands composed of their younger brothers, grooms, gamekeepers and huntsmen, were from the very first day on which they took the field qualified to play their part with credit in a skirmish. The steadiness, the prompt obedience, the mechanical precision of movement, which are characteristic of the regular soldier, these gallant volunteers never attained. But they were at first opposed to enemies as undisciplined as themselves and far less active, athletic and daring. For a time, therefore, the Cavaliers were successful in almost every encounter.'

Until after Marston Moor, Cromwell had no men under him on whom he could rely except the men of his own regiment. At Marston Moor it was his regiment that won the day – a regiment, says Macaulay, formed not of mere mercenaries but 'of recruits of decent station and grave character, fearing God and zealous for public

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liberty. . . . While he subjected them to a discipline more rigid than had ever before been known in England, he administered to their intellectual and moral nature stimulants of fearful potency.' Soon he had organised the whole army on the same principles on which he had organised his own regiment. 'As soon as this process was complete, the event of the war was decided.' For particulars as to the composition of Cromwell's forces thus constituted, the reader may be referred to Sir John Fortescue's *History of the British Army*. One more extract from Macaulay will recall for us something of its nature and spirit. He has just pointed out that during the thirteen years, 1647–60, England, under various names and forms, was really governed by the sword. 'Never before that time, or since that time, was the civil power in our country subjected to military dictation.' He continues:

'The army which now became supreme in the state was an army very different from any that has since been seen among us. At present the pay of the common soldier is not such as can induce any but the humblest class of English labourers from their calling. A barrier almost impassable separates him from the commissioned officer. The great majority of those who rise high in the service rise by purchase.[1] So numerous and extensive are the remote dependencies of England, that every man who enlists in the line must expect to spend many years in exile and some years in climates unfavourable to the health and vigour of the European race. The army of the Long Parliament was raised for home service. The pay of the private soldier was much above the wages earned by the great body of the people; and, if he distinguished himself by intelligence and courage, he might hope to attain high commands. The ranks were accordingly composed of persons superior in

[1]Macaulay was writing, it will be remembered, in 1849.

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station and education to the multitude. These persons, sober, moral, diligent and accustomed to reflect, had been induced to take up arms, not by the pressure of want, not by the love of novelty and licence, not by the art of recruiting officers, but by religious and political zeal, mingled with the desire of distinction and promotion. The boast of the soldiers, as we find it recorded in their solemn resolutions, was that they had not been forced into the service, nor had enlisted chiefly for the sake of lucre, that they were no janissaries but freeborn Englishmen, who had, of their own accord, put their lives in jeopardy for the liberties and religion of England and whose right and duty it was to watch over the welfare of the nation which they had saved.'

It was a force well suited to its time and its task. Macaulay proceeds to catalogue some of the idiosyncrasies and eccentricities which marked it and which would be intolerable in any ordinary army. He smiles at the notion of a modern regiment holding a religious meeting 'at which a corporal versed in Scripture should lead the devotions of his less gifted colonel, and admonish a back-sliding major.'[1] But such, he insists, 'was the intelligence, the gravity, and the self-command of the warriors whom Cromwell had trained, that in their camp a political organisation and a religious organisation could exist without destroying military organisation. The same men who, off duty, were noted as demagogues and field preachers, were distinguished by steadiness, by the spirit of order and by prompt obedience on watch, on drill and on the field of battle.'

One of the conditions agreed to at the Restoration of

[1]Even at the time there was felt to be an excess in the matter of preaching. 'One regiment of the New Model mutinied when its colonel opened the command with a sermon, and the Parliament with great good sense prohibited by Ordinance the preaching of laymen in the Army' (Fortescue's *History of the British Army*).

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Charles II. in 1660 was that Cromwell's army should be disbanded; but the same Act of Parliament which provided for this, provided at the same time that Charles should be allowed to maintain garrisons for certain places and to raise and keep up a royal guard consisting of six infantry regiments and two of cavalry; and it is very interesting to note that one of the most famous of the new regiments, the troop of Life Guards known officially as the Royal Horse Guards and popularly as 'The Blues' – or 'Lord Oxford's Regiment of Horse,' as it was then called – was formed of old Cromwellian troopers.[1]

The New Model Army had contained eleven regiments of regular cavalry, and in addition one other regiment of a thousand men called Dragoons, who were simply mounted infantry. They would seem to have been modelled on a French regiment formed about 1554 for service in the war in Piedmont. They derived their name from their chief weapon, the dragon, 'a short piece with a barrel sixteen inches long of full musket bore, fitted with snap or fire-lock' – so it is described by the contemporary military writer, Markham. But this special arm was not essential to the character of a dragoon, and the title came to be applied to mounted men armed with any kind of musket or firelock. In a Royal Warrant, dated April 2, 1672, by which Charles II. ordained the establishment of a new Dragoon Regiment, we find additional particulars as to their equipment. The Warrant reads as follows:

'Our will and pleasure is, that a Regiment of Dragoones which we have established and ordered to be raised, in twelve Troopes of fourscore in each beside officers, who are to be under the command of Our most deare and most intirely beloved Cousin Prince Rupert, shall be armed out

[1]C. H. Firth, *Cromwell's Army*.

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of Our stoares remaining within Our office of the Ordinance, as followeth; that is to say, three corporalls, two serjeants, the gentlemen at armes, and twelve souldiers of each of the said twelve Troopes, are to have and carry each of them one halbard, and one case of pistolls with holsters; and the rest of the souldiers of the several Troopes aforesaid, are to have and to carry each of them one matchlocke musquet, with a collar of bandaliers, and also to have and to carry one bayonet,[1] or greatknife. That each lieutenant have and carry one partizan; and that two drums be delivered out for each Troope of the said Regiment.'

This was the Regiment to which Sir John Fortescue alludes in the page devoted to the dragoons of Charles II. in his *History of the British Army*. It was to be disbanded in 1684. The Tangier Horse, now called the 1st Royal Dragoons,[2] was converted into a regiment of dragoons in the same year on its return from foreign service. 'Four years later there was added to the establishment,' Sir John Fortescue proceeds to say, 'a Scotch regiment which bears a famous name. It was made up in 1681 of three independent troops, under the name of the Royal Regiment of Dragoons of Scotland. It now ranks as the second regiment of the Cavalry of the Line, and is known to all the world as the Scots Greys.'

The rest of the page deserves to be cited here in full:

'Dragoons still preserved their original character of

[1]This appears to be the first introduction of bayonets into the English Army. The bayonet of this period was inserted in the muzzle of the gun, and the soldier had to unfix it every time he fired, fixing it again when he was going to charge.

[2]In his *History of the 5th Dragoon Guards*, the Hon. R. L. Pomeroy has pointed out that 'the difference between Horse and Dragoons lay in the fact that the Horse relied entirely on shock tactics, and never fought without their horses, whereas the Dragoon was trained 'to fight indifferently on horse or foot' – an ambiguous expression which led to many jokes at the expense of the Dragoons as long as they formed a separate arm.'

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mounted infantry. Twelve men of each troop besides the non-commissioned officers were armed with the halberd and a pair of pistols, while the remainder were equipped with matchlock muskets, bandoliers and, after 1672, with bayonets. In 1687 this equipment was improved by the substitution of flintlocks for matchlocks, of cartridge boxes for bandoliers, and of buckets, in addition to the old slings, for the carriage of muskets. The tactical unit of the dragoons was still called the company, though at the close of the Civil War often denominated the troop; but the tendency of dragoons to assimilate themselves to horse is seen in the substitution of cornet for ensign as the title of the junior subaltern. This tendency was perhaps the stranger, since the companies of dragoons, eighty men strong, must have presented a favourable contrast to the weak and attenuated troops of horse.'

James II., very shortly after his accession in 1685, felt the need of additional cavalry. Charles II., who was entirely lacking in military instincts, had left the army in a very unsatisfactory condition; and when, in June, the Duke of Monmouth landed at Lyme Regis and raised the standard of rebellion, James found it necessary to raise new forces without an instant's delay. Among the numerous formations thus hastily recruited were four troops of cavalry, which were shortly brought together as the Regiment which in course of time was to be known as the 2nd Dragoon Guards. They were respectively raised around Hounslow by Sir John Talbot, at Edgware by Mr. John Lloyd, in Yorkshire by Sir Michael Wentworth, and in London by Lord Aylesbury; and the precise personnel of each troop is given as 3 corporals, 2 buglers, and 60 men.[1] By commission bearing date June 20, 1685, these four troops were constituted a regiment under command of Henry, the second Earl of

[1]War Office Records, 26/6.

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Peterborough[1] – the Regiment which was to be called in 1746 the 2nd Dragoon Guards, and which was to be known later as the Queen's Bays.

Peterborough's little command marched westward to take part in the advance against Monmouth. They arrived too late to take part in the battle of Sedgmoor on July 6, at which Monmouth was defeated; but two troops of the Regiment were detailed to mount guard over the prisoners, another to patrol the roads for stragglers and suspicious persons, while the fourth went to Devizes in charge of the artillery.

On July 18, 1685, the Earl was notified from Whitehall as follows:

'His Majesty commands me to signify his pleasure that you forthwith return an account, in what condition the Regiment under your command is at present. How armed and cloathed, and in what readiness for His Majesty's service. I am, etc., WILLIAM BLATHWAYTE.'

The immediate sequel to this order was that two additional troops were raised, one by Lord Peterborough and the other by Sir John Egerton, the strength of a troop being reduced to forty men. The 3rd Regiment of Horse, as it was now formally designated, received the equipment of cuirassiers, including uniforms of scarlet, three-cornered hats bound with silver, heavy high boots, iron head-pieces, and an armament consisting of sword, carbine and two pistols. Appended is a table included in the Royal

[1]This Lord Peterborough, b. 1658, d. 1735, is not to be confounded with his brilliant and eccentric nephew, the third Earl, subsequently renowned in the War of the Spanish Succession. The second Earl had fought gallantly for Charles I., was wounded at Newbury, and had been banished for an attempt to rescue the King in 1648. At the Restoration he was appointed Governor of Tangier, and was created a K.G. by James II.

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Warrant of January 1, 1686, setting forth the strength of the Regiment and rates of pay:[1]

THE EARL OF PETERBOROUGH'S REGIMENT OF HORSE.

Field and Staff Officers.	Per Diem.			Per Annum.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
The Colonel, as Colonel	0	12	0	219	0	0
Lieutenant-Colonel, as Lieut.-Colonel	0	8	0	146	0	0
The Major (who has no troop) for himself, horses, and servants	1	0	0	365	0	0
Adjutant	0	5	0	91	5	0
Chaplaine	0	6	8	121	13	4
Chirurgeon iv^{s} per day, and j horse to carry his chest, ij^{s} per day	0	6	0	109	10	0
A Kettle-Drummer to the Colonel's troop	0	3	0	54	15	0
	3	0	8	1,107	3	4
The Colonel's Troop.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
The Colonel, as Captaine, x^{s} per day and ij horses, each ij^{s} per day	0	14	0	255	10	0
Lievtenant vi^{s}, per day and ij horses each ij^{s}	0	10	0	182	10	0
Cornett, v^{s}, and ij horses each ij^{s}	0	9	0	164	5	0
Quarter-Master iv^{s}, and j horse ij^{s}	0	6	0	109	10	0
Three Corporalls, each at iij^{s} per day	0	9	0	164	5	0
Two Trumpeters, each at ij^{s} viii^{d} per day	0	5	4	97	6	8
Forty Private Soldiers, at ij^{s} vi^{d} per day	5	0	0	1,825	0	0
	7	13	4	2,798	6	8
Five Troops more, of the same numbers, and at the same rates of pay as the Colonel's troop	38	6	8	13,991	13	4
Total for this Regiment	49	0	8	17,897	3	4

It is also of interest to reproduce a warrant under Lord Peterborough's hand, nominating George (afterwards General Lord) Carpenter as Quartermaster of the Regiment:

[1]War Office Records.

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'HENRY, EARL OF PETERBOROUGH, Peer of England, Lord Mordaunt, Lord Baron of Turvey, Groom of the Stole, and First Gentleman of the Bedchamber to His Majesty, Lord High Steward to the Queen, Lord-Lieutenant of the county of Northampton, one of the Lords of His Majesty's Most Honourable Privy Council, and Knight of the Most Noble Order of the Garter;

To GEORGE CARPENTER, GENTLEMAN.

By virtue of a commission unto me given by the King's most excellent Majesty to be Colonel of a regiment of Horse, I do hereby appoint and constitute you to be Quarter Master of that troop in my regiment whereof the Lord Aylesbury is Captain. You are therefore to take upon you the care and charge of Quarter Master, and duly and carefully to doe and execute all things appertaining or incident to the place and duty of Quarter Master, and the officers and soldiers of the said troop are to acknowledge you as Quarter Master to the same; and you are to observe and follow such orders and directions as you shall from time to time receive from me or other your superior officer, according to the discipline of warr, and in pursuance of the trust reposed in you.

'GIVEN under my hand and seal this 2nd day of March, 1685–6, in the second year of His Majesty's reign.

'PETERBOROUGH.'

During the first two or three years of its existence the Regiment was engaged in purely routine work. The late summer of 1685 saw it quartered in the East-end of London and at Battersea, sometimes helping to provide escorts for the Royal Family and for convoys of payment for the Navy at Portsmouth, etc. In October it went into quarters around Oxford and Woodstock, where the troopers were reviewed by that eminent soldier, General Sir John Lanier, and where

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they remained until the ensuing February. Returning temporarily to the metropolis, they were sent back to Oxfordshire for a couple of months, and were then transferred to the great camp being formed on Hounslow Heath under the personal superintendence of King James.

The rules for the conduct of the camp at Hounslow included the following, under date May 28, 1686:

'That the Dragoones have for each horse for a week or 7 days two trusses of good new hay weighing 64 lb. a truss, and a truss of straw of 36 lb. at 4d. a man a night. That there be a sufficient quantity of very good and sweet oates in store within two miles of the camp for the Horse and Dragoones, to be payd for by them as they fetch them, at sixpence a peck. That both the Horse, Foot and Dragoones have straw for their tents at the allowance of two trusses for each tent, to be changed for new every ten days. That stakes or picketts be provided for the Horse and Dragoones, for each one.'[1]

In taking up its position at Hounslow on June 22, the Regiment was placed to the left of Sir John Lanier's 1st Brigade. There were grand doings on the Heath during that summer, the King and his party being accommodated in a handsome marquee. Sham-fights and manœuvres were of frequent occurrence, culminating, on the last day of June, in the review of 12,000 troops before the King and Queen; the Princess Anne, afterwards Queen Anne, was also a frequent visitor. Here follow the names and ranks of the officers of the '3rd Horse' in 1686:

Henry, Earl of Peterborough .	Colonel.
Sir John Talbot	Lieut.-Colonel.
John Chitham	Major.

[1]War Office Records.

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John Lloyd Henry O'Conner Sir Michael Wentworth Henry Lawson	. . . .	Captains.
William Barlow William Scott Ferdinand Kelly Gilbert Talbot Walters Mildmay John Chitham	. . . .	Lieutenants.
Samuel Yatches Thomas Lloyd Francis Lennard Oratio Walpool Francis Norris William Bell	. . . .	Cornets.
Michael Poulton	. . . .	Chaplain.
William Pogston	. . . .	Adjutant.
Thoroughgood Meatys	. . . .	Chirurgeon.

A visit paid by the Regiment to Oxford early in 1686 comes in for mention by Macaulay in volume i. of his *History*. The occasion was a demonstration against the authorities of University College. Obadiah Walker had turned this college, Macaulay says, 'into a Roman Catholic seminary,' and Oxford, 'the tranquil and majestic city, so long the stronghold of monarchical principles, was agitated by passions it had never before known.' Undergraduates had assembled under Walker's windows, chanting satirical ditties. When a travelling company of actors performed that week a play entitled *Howard's Committee*, one of the most conspicuous characters in which was an old hypocrite named Obadiah, the coincidence was welcomed hilariously. 'The audience shouted with delight

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when, in the last scene, Obadiah was dragged in with a halter round his neck; and the acclamations redoubled when one of the players, departing from the written text of the comedy, proclaimed that Obadiah should be hanged because he had changed his religion. The King was much provoked by this insult. So mutinous indeed was the temper of the University that one of the newly raised regiments, the same which is now called the 2nd Dragoon Guards, was quartered at Oxford for the purpose of preventing an outbreak.'

In the late summer of 1686 the Regiment performed a route march to Liverpool, incidentally collecting the revenue monies levied there, and returned to Oxfordshire *via* London in August. They formed a guard of honour for the King on a state visit to Salisbury, remained in their Midland quarters during that winter, and gravitated between Oxford and Hounslow in the ensuing summer. A period of drastic change was, however, arriving to the '3rd Horse.' It had long been known to King James that there was a growing feeling in his army in favour of the Protestant religion, and he therefore took the precaution of replacing a considerable number of Protestants by Catholics. Lord Peterborough promptly re-embraced the religion of his forefathers; but other commissioned ranks in this Regiment were superseded as follows: Sir John Talbot, Lieutenant-Colonel, by Major Chitham, and the latter by Captain O'Conner; Sir Michael Wentworth by the Earl of Castlehaven; Lieutenant Scott by Edmund Riley; Cornet Lennard by J. Wiltshire; Cornet Yatches by George Carpenter; and Cornet Norris by Count Gavemberti. At midsummer in 1688 the Regiment found themselves again on Hounslow Heath, where their Colonel was one of those in receipt of the following communication from Whitehall in allusion to the birth

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OFFICER THIRD HORSE, 1687

From the plate in Cannon's "History of the Regiment"

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of the child afterwards known to history as the Chevalier de St. George.

'WHITEHALL, 10*th June* 1688.

'MY LORD,

'It having pleased Almighty God, about 10 of the clock this morning, to bless His Majesty and his Royal Consort the Queen with the birth of a son, and His Majesty's kingdoms and dominions with a Prince, His Majesty has commanded me to signify the same to you, that upon notice give of it by you to the several troops of the regiment under your command, they may join in the public thanksgiving to be observed in these parts on the 1st of July next, and give such other demonstrations of their joy, for so great a blessing, as you shall judge fit on this occasion.—I am, etc.,

'WILLIAM BLATHWAYTE.

'To the Earl of Peterborough,
'Colonel of one of His Majesty's
Regiments of Horse.'

In that summer it became well known in England that William, Prince of Orange, was preparing for an invasion of this country on the grand scale, having received many promises of support. Among the regiments most trusted by James was that of Lord Peterborough, who, under date September 22, 1688, was notified that 'all the Troops of our Regiment of Horse under your command are to be forthwith filled up and recruited with ten troopers with horses fitt for service in each troop, more than the present complement.'[1]

In that fateful autumn the 3rd Horse formed part of a division encamped around Colchester, under the command of Sir John Lanier. But under special orders from the King they were brought to the Metropolis together with the

[1]War Office Papers.

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following units, which the King believed to be among the pick of his troops:

JAMES R.

'Our will and pleasure is, that the forces hereafter mentioned be quartered as followeth:

The Earl of Peterborough's Horse.	In the precincts of Holborn.
The Scots Foot Guards–	
The Earl of Arran's Horse	Clerkenwell and adjacents.
Colonel Wachop's Foot	
Colonel Hamilton's Horse	Spital Fields and Tower Hamlets.
Colonel Buchan's Foot	
Troop of Scots Guards	Westminster, Tower Hamlets and Minories.
Royal Regiment of Scots Horse	
Queen's Regiment of Dragoons	
Princess Anne's Dragoons	
Royal Regiment of Scots Dragoons	Southwark, Lambeth and Rotherhithe.'[1]
Holland Regiment of Foot	
Lord Forbes's Regiment of Foot	

As soon, however, as the Prince of Orange had landed at Torbay and was engaged upon the triumphant march that was to terminate in London, Lord Peterborough's Regiment was directed, with other troops, to quit the capital and oppose their progress. Officers were to wear the breastplates if they so desired, but severe fighting was not anticipated. King James reviewed the corps at Salisbury on November 21, 1688, but already any idea of armed resistance to the advance of 'William and Mary' was fast falling away, and troops and their leaders were fast throwing in their lot with the new Government. To the honour of the 3rd Horse be it said, they did not abandon the Stuart cause until after James had quitted England, when they gave in their allegiance to William III.

[1] W.O. Marching Orders.

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It followed that the immediate supersession of their commanding officer was at once inevitable. Lord Peterborough was relieved from his colonelcy, by order of the new monarch, on December 31, 1688, and was impeached for having become 'reconciled to the Church of Rome.' (This impeachment was dropped, and he survived until 1697.) His successor as Protestant leader of the Regiment was Colonel The Hon. Edward Villiers, Lord Grandison's son and heir, who, as Lieutenant-Colonel of the Life Guards, had commanded the cavalry brigade which fought against Monmouth at Sedgmoor. He won the immediate favour of King William III. by his coolness in charge of the Royal Guard at Whitehall at the time of James's flight from London.

Owing to the disbandment of a number of the regiments which had been recruited under the late régime, Colonel Villiers' new command was immediately strengthened by two troops of Lord Brandon's, and 50 troopers of Colonel Slingsby's regiments. In the spring of 1689, the 3rd were ordered to Scotland on the alarm of a revolt against the new King's authority; but were stopped *en route* at Ripon and on the Lancashire coast, and were thence sent back to the south.

Ireland was now destined, however, to provide the source of serious trouble in a military sense; and, with James II. already arrived in that country with a force of French troops and with an impassioned appeal to the populace to embrace his cause, it was to be the immediate theatre of a fresh war.

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CHAPTER II

The War in Ireland, 1689–91

One of King William's most devoted adherents, Field-Marshal the Duke of Schomberg, a vigorous old man of eighty, was in the first instance dispatched to the 'island of Ireland' with an instalment of 10,000 troops. A fortified camp was prepared around Dundalk, and Colonel Villiers' Regiment, embarking at Hoylake, Cheshire, on September 2, 1689, arrived at that destination after terrible storms at sea. 'Villiers,' writes Colonel Trelawney to the Earl of Shrewsbury, 'is to embark to-day, but as it has blown a storm these two days it will be difficult to ship the horses.'[1] Indeed it was said that no less than 100 troop-horses were lost on the voyage to Ireland. Apparently, too, certain horses had to be requisitioned for the purpose, for we find Lord Shrewsbury writing to Colonel Villiers while the preparations were going forward: 'Concerning Sir Edward Smith's horses, I can give no directions in these cases where so late a law prescribes by whom and in what manner the seizure shall be made.'

Schomberg was quickly reinforced, and an official list of King William's forces in Ireland, under date September 20, 1689, returns them at 4090 horse, 29,254 foot, and 840 'dragoons.' In a dispatch from Schomberg to the King on October 8, he does not appear to think highly of the morale of the Anglo-Dutch officers in Ireland: 'If our Irish colonels were as capable in war as they are in committing pillage and not paying the soldiers here, your Majesty would be better served. The French cavalry do their duty better than the others. I have worked all this week to regulate the payment by the captains of their soldiers so that they should not

[1] State Papers.

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cheat them. The colonels take so little care of their regiments that their arms are broken, and I am forced to supply others. If the leave asked for by all the officers was granted, the greater part of the army would be without officers. Sickness is only feigned by them – they are only tired of being here.'[1]

Shortly after his arrival in the camp at Dundalk, Colonel Villiers was given the rank of Brigadier-General, and put in command of all the cavalry. The winter of 1689–90 was one of unmitigated suffering. The Regiment was quartered in and around Carlingford, and suffered greatly from sickness and hardship. A troublesome guerilla warfare was carried on by the peasantry, who laid ambushes for small parties of the troops, and who would cut off small scouting parties, carry off horses, etc. Villiers alternated with Coy's Regiment in keeping open the pass of Newry. On Christmas Day, Colonel Villiers, Sir John Lanier and other officers were requested for their opinion as to the desirability of forcing the passage of the Shannon near Athlone in opposition to a large force of the enemy under Patrick Sarsfield. Their decision was in favour of the offensive, but thanks to delay and mismanagement the movement was abandoned, after Lord Lisburn, with 1000 foot and 300 horse, had occupied Lanesborough and remained there for a week. It then became Colonel Villiers' duty to inform him that 'it was not to the King's service to take a post on the other side of the Shannon,'[2] and the advance was held up.

Villiers does not appear to have been a great favourite with the Duke of Schomberg, who writes to King William that he is 'careless of his regiment. The cavalry must be but [*sic*, put?] in better condition, and they have not the men fitted to do it. Brigadier Villiers is but little qualified to

[1]State Papers. [2]Lord Lisburn's Dispatch. State Papers, 1689.

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command, though very active in looking over his own interests' (March 3, 1690).

In May 1690, Villiers' command was engaged in the reduction of the fortified town of Charlemont. 'I have not laid siege to Charlemont,' wrote Schomberg on the 5th, 'not having four pieces of artillery fit for the purpose . . . the garrison is in great straits and the horses have been killed for provisions.' This being the case, the defence could only be prolonged for a few days. It is stated by Story,[1] that when the Governor, Sir Teague O'Regan, was summoned to surrender, he replied, 'Tell the General that he is an old knave, and by St. Patrick he shall not have the town at all!' When, however, the starving garrison did march out on May 12, the historian adds that 'Teague himself had a great bunch upon his back, a plain red coat, an old weather-beaten wig hanging down at full length, a little narrow white beaver hat cocked up on one side, a yellow cravat, his boots with a thousand wrinkles in them, and, though it was a very hot day, yet he had a great muff hanging about him; and, to crown all, he was almost tipsy.' This spirited fighter must have been speedily exchanged, for we find him shortly afterwards holding out at Sligo for King James with 800 men.

William III. in person now arrived at the camp near Dundalk from England, to show himself, as usual, a great soldier. In June, Villiers' Dragoons were reinforced by 70 men and horses, and they reported for duty at the King's headquarters. The battle of the Boyne was to be their first important engagement, and all ranks were burning with impatience for the fight. Having advanced from Ardee to the banks of the 'Boyne water,' the Orange army came to grips with their foe in a struggle for the line of that river on July 1, 1690. It was a combat remarkable for sharp

[1] *Campaigns of Ireland.*

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cavalry fighting, and in fording the river under a heavy fusillade, the 3rd Horse were immediately under their King's eye. The close contest did not last long. King James's army was quickly in full retreat, the losses of the victors not exceeding 500 killed and wounded. A heavy blow was the death of the Duke of Schomberg. King William was slightly wounded. Resting on the field of battle, he shortly received intelligence of the flight of James and the evacuation of Dublin. The Duke of Ormond was thereupon dispatched with 1000 cavalry to take possession of the capital, and with him went Villiers' Dragoons.

The six troops of the Regiment were now divided, two remaining in Dublin with the heavy guns and ammunition-train in their care, and four being diverted to the siege of Limerick. In early August the two former troops were directed to escort the siege-guns and ammunition to army headquarters, and on the 11th they had reached the ruined castle of Ballyneety, about five miles south of Limerick and only a few miles from King William's headquarters and safety. Here the escort were taking their rest on a beautiful day, when they were attacked by a small body of cavalry, led by Patrick Sarsfield. So complete was the surprise that, although Lieutenant Ball and his handful made what resistance they could, they were speedily wiped out, as also were several non-combatants in the vicinity of the bivouac. Sarsfield's men then made a bonfire of the artillery and ammunition. They retreated, and a pursuit headed by Sir John Lanier and Brigadier Villiers failed to overtake them. It was the destruction of this escort that led to the abandonment of the siege until the following year. Sarsfield was for this feat created Earl of Lucan by King James.

As to the rôle played in the siege by the other four troops left outside Limerick, neither Cannon's *History of the Regiment* nor any such chronicles tell us anything ; but

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readers of *Tristram Shandy* will be able to imagine some of their experiences. Perhaps they were to be found occupying the very trenches in which Uncle Toby would have succumbed to the 'radical moisture,' but for the claret and Madeira and other cordials which he and Corporal Trim imbibed in order to preserve their 'radical heat.' Trim's description of the whole region will be remembered – 'a devilish wet swampy country, all cut through with drains and bogs.' To make matters worse, rain fell incessantly. 'The soldiers in the trenches,' says Macaulay, 'were up to their knees in mire. No precaution was neglected: but though drains were dug to carry off the water, and though pewter basins of usquebaugh and brandy blazed all night in the tents, cases of fever had already occurred, and it might well be apprehended that if the army remained a few days longer on that swampy soil there would be a pestilence more terrible than that which had raged twelve months before under the walls of Dundalk.'[1]

The first siege of Limerick by William's forces was abandoned at the end of August 1690; but Lord Marlborough, the future illustrious Duke, arrived from England with a reinforcement of 5000, and reduced Cork. Brigadier Villiers was then placed in command of the investment of Kinsale with a force including his own regiment. He made such rapid progress that the place was in his hands by October 15. We had then 'played upon the fort for three days with 8 pieces of cannon of 24 lb., and 2 mortars. One of our English ships of sixty guns unfortunately blew up and not a man escaped. The waters are so far out that the enemy dare not venture to attempt the relief of Kinsale, but have retired towards Limerick.'[2]

[1]In a previous chapter of Macaulay's *History*, vol. iii., there is a full account of the terrible pestilence which had broken out in Schomberg's camp near Dundalk.

[2]Dispatch. State Papers.

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The winter of 1690–1 was passed by the Regiment in very much the same manner as the previous one – in scouting, foraging and rounding up the hostile guerilla or 'rapparee' bands. In March 1691, Captain Carpenter (afterwards Lord Carpenter and Colonel of the 3rd Dragoons) led out one such party on a successful reconnaissance, and on the 15th a very gallant feat was performed by a dozen troopers at Cappoquin, Co. Waterford. Having heard that in the absence of nearly all their comrades from camp a number of fine new horses from England were in danger from at least a hundred raiders, this handful rode off to meet them. The only officers of the Regiment present were Lieutenant Spicer and Cornet Collins. The dozen charged the hundred with such dash and energy that the latter were driven into a wood and, another 18 troopers making their appearance, 40 of the enemy were killed and an officer and 7 men were captured.[1]

The British Army in Ireland was at this time commanded by General de Ginkell, and that of the Stuart cause by the French General St. Ruth. The 3rd Horse were designated for the siege of Athlone in the spring campaign of 1691, and shortly before they started on that mission two troops of them, supported by 140 dragoons and militia, engaged in another successful raid. After a long night march on April 19, they arrived at Macroom, Co. Cork, where they killed a score of the enemy and captured a number of prisoners, horses and cattle. Major James Kirk was in command, and he was promoted Lieutenant-Colonel for his initiative on this occasion. He was not destined to enjoy his promotion for any length of time. Owing to the difficulties of the river Shannon, the cavalry were able to play no important rôle in the siege of Athlone. They were, in fact, performing the functions of infantry in the trenches

[1] 'Without the loss of a man on our side' (*London Gazette*).

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when Lieut.-Colonel Kirk was killed by a cannon-ball. He was one of the Regiment's most distinguished officers and beloved by all ranks. The siege was pressed with resolution, a contingent of Danish troops being in support, and the assault was delivered on June 30. It proved completely successful, the spoils of war including two big and half a dozen small guns and a quantity of corn. 'Amongst the prisoners,' wrote General de Ginkell in his dispatch, 'is Major-General Maxfield, who complains very much of St. Ruth not being personally in command at the time of the attack.' The enemy left 1000 dead on the field of battle, and for this conquest de Ginkell was created Earl of Athlone. He speedily followed up his reduction of that town.

On July 12, 1691, almost exactly twelve months after the battle of the Boyne, the 3rd Horse played a conspicuous part in the victory of Aughrim. It was included, with the regiments of Sir F. Langston, the Earl of Oxford and the Marquis de Ruvigny, in a brigade commanded by Brigadier Villiers, and was placed on the left wing. The enemy, this time led by St. Ruth in person, 'was much superior to ours and their position more advantageous. Yet your troops attacked them with the greatest determination and bravery, totally defeating them.'[1] Villiers appears to have handled the 3rd, and his other cavalry, with the utmost skill, especially as the hostile front was protected by boggy land and carefully prepared obstacles. Eventually the British cavalry broke right through the Irish infantry, who were completely routed.

The battle of Aughrim lasted four hours. At eight in the evening the brave St. Ruth was struck dead either by a chain-shot or by a cannon-ball while in the act of rallying his troops for a last counter-charge. His fall was the signal for a general debacle, though the pursuit was soon stopped

[1]De Ginkell's Dispatch (State Papers).

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by the coming-on of darkness. Of both sides, some 4000 dead lay on that stricken field, and all of St. Ruth's artillery was captured. The prisoners included two general officers, Hamilton and Dorrington; on the British side the Prince of Hesse-Darmstadt and Colonels Belcastle and Cutts were wounded.

The majority of the fugitives from Aughrim went to swell the garrison of Limerick, where the Duke of Tyrconnel, 'Lord-Lieutenant and General Governor of Ireland,' had been broadcasting bribes in order to seduce soldiers from William III.'s service. 'We do hereby publish, declare and engage that every trooper, dragoon or soldier who at any time hereafter quits the service of the Prince of Orange and repairs to Limerick, Athlone, Banagher, Sligo or Galway, shall receive the following sums: every such trooper or dragoon, having his horse with him, shall have two pistoles in gold or silver, and every common soldier a pistole in the like coin.'[1] Investigation has failed to discover that any trooper of the 3rd Horse was tempted from his allegiance by this offer.

Before the resumption of the siege of Limerick, in which Villiers' Regiment was engaged, the country for a wide area around that city was laid waste by King William's army. Brigadier Villiers and Lord Lisburn both complained bitterly of the mismanagement and failure of an expedition led by Sir John Lanier and General Douglas, intended for the reduction of Lanesborough and Sligo. It led to a complaint by the Lords Justices of Ireland, who commended General Villiers' zeal in the public service but regretted that certain other officers 'are not hearty in the King's interest.'

As in the case of the siege of Athlone, the 3rd Horse found practically no opportunities for distinction in the second siege of Limerick, which was closely invested in August 1691. The story of the celebrated Treaty of Limerick,

[1]State Papers, Ireland.

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concluded on September 25, is chiefly of interest to students of military history in that it directly led to the original enrolment of the famed Irish Brigade in the service of France. Both the 'Irish' and 'English' quarters of the devoted city were terribly knocked about by artillery fire, and the storming of the latter made the former untenable. Our dragoons, apart from covering operations, were principally engaged in the uninspiring work of the trenches, and in supporting the infantry in bringing further pressure to bear upon the gradually starving and worn-out garrison.

The Regiment remained in winter quarters on the Irish establishment until the spring of 1692. On April 8 they landed at Barnstaple, Devon, after an absence from England of about two and a half years, and passed the next few weeks in billets at Salisbury and in several Wiltshire hamlets. The following order, issued to Brigadier Villiers, had the effect of filling up the gaps in the Regiment caused by the campaigning in Ireland:

'Whereas we have thought fitt to add nine troopers to each troop of our Regiment of Horse under your command. These are to authorise you to raise the said additional number of men with horses fitt for service, and as you shall raise any of them you are after the 31st day of this instant January to give notice thereof to our Commissary-Generall of the Musters, or to our Chief-Deputy Commissary, that they may be mustered accordingly, from which Muster they are to commence and be in our Pay and entertainment. And all Magistrates, Justices of the Peace, Constables and other our officers whom it may concern, are required to be assisting to you herein and in providing Quarters and otherwise as there shall be occasion. Given, etc. this 17th January 1692/3.'[1]

[1]War Office Records, 26.

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Casualty Lists were very irregularly kept at this period, and the regimental losses at the battle of Aughrim alone appear to have been preserved. They amounted to 1 captain, 2 lieutenants, 1 cornet and 26 troopers killed; 1 captain, 1 lieutenant and 22 troopers wounded; or a total of 54 – the heaviest loss incurred by the 3rd Horse in any engagement of the Irish War.

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CHAPTER III

The Campaign in Flanders, 1694–7

During several months of 1692–3 the Regiment was engaged in the not wholly congenial task of dealing with the bands of highwaymen and footpads whom the prevailing conditions of unrest had encouraged to prey upon the approaches to the Metropolis and the other great centres.[1] In the absence of an organised police force, the 3rd Horse were utilised as patrols and mounted gendarmerie: by a coincidence, they were directed to pay particular attention to the vicinity of their old headquarters, Hounslow Heath, and to Blackheath, two notable rendezvous of the 'tobymen.' It was slightly anterior to the period of Dick Turpin and other leading knights-of-the-road; but our troopers were successful in dealing effectively with several marauding bands. Nevertheless, they were by no means displeased to be relieved of these duties by a Dutch regiment of cavalry. The 3rd next had the honour of furnishing escorts for William III., *en route* to Harwich, where the King embarked for the war in the Low Countries. It was now, in the spring of 1693, believed that the Regiment would not at once see active service abroad on account of King Louis' elaborate preparations for an invasion of England in support of James II.'s claims. The 3rd were, in fact, not warned for foreign service, until our great naval victory of La Hogue rendered abortive the threat of French invasion. The winter of 1693–4 was spent in cantonments in the Midlands, around Coventry, Northampton and Birmingham. Brigadier-General Villiers' regretted death occurred during this winter, and the vacancy was filled (January 19, 1694)

[1] See A. Smith's *General History of the Highwaymen*, 1719.

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by the appointment of Brigadier Richard Leveson, who had distinguished himself in Ireland and elsewhere as Colonel of the 3rd Dragoons. That Regiment and the 3rd Horse were presently transferred to London and, on March 26, King William reviewed them in Hyde Park and paid a flattering compliment to their smart and soldierly bearing.

Two days later they sailed from the Thames for the seat of war in Flanders, there to fight immediately under the eye of their King. Early in April they disembarked at Williamsport in Northern Brabant, whence they moved to join, at Mont St. André, the headquarters of the splendid army of mixed nationalities which William opposed to the French. The Regiment was brigaded with Wood's (afterwards the 3rd Dragoon Guards), Wyndham's (afterwards the 6th Dragoon Guards), and Lord Galway's Regiment (afterwards disbanded), under the general command of its new Colonel, Brigadier Leveson. For several months the 3rd Horse were not seriously engaged save for an occasional skirmish; but with the coming of autumn they took part in the covering operations during the siege of Huy, after which they went into winter quarters at Ghent. The siege of Huy was conducted, as regards the artillery and engineering arm, by M. Cohorn,[1] the inventor of the small bronze mortar which bears his name, and the town was taken without a great deal of difficulty.

All the allied cavalry was quartered in and around Ghent for the winter of 1694–5. They were reviewed by King William and 'made a very gallant show, the horses being in very good order and the men well clothed and armed.' In April 1695 thirty men from each troop of the 3rd Horse were requisitioned on the alarm of new field-works being constructed by the enemy on the Flemish frontier; but this

[1] A French corruption of the Dutch name Coehoorn.

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only amounted to a reconnaissance in force. A month afterwards the Regiment was in line with the army at Arseel and brigaded as before. Brigadier Leveson was promoted Major-General.

The siege of the great fortress of Namur was about to commence, and it was estimated that King William's and the opposing army, endeavouring to prevent its fall, each amounted to some 100,000 strong. The investment was preceded by most brilliant manœuvring on William's part, and the garrison were speedily contained within the fortifications. Namur played an even more important part in the fighting then than it was to do in 1914, and the scene of operations extended to the theatre of the war in 1819. The 3rd Horse was one of several cavalry regiments detailed to keep open the besieging army's communications. For this purpose they occupied the open country from Charleroi to Mons, and in August (1695) took post in the village of Waterloo.

The Governor of Namur was the resourceful and able Count de Guiscard, but the brain of the defence was the celebrated Marshal de Boufflers.[1] He threw himself into the city with seven regiments of dragoons, which even then only raised the strength of the garrison to 15,000. William, having brilliantly outmanœuvred and held off the 'relieving' army under the dilatory and unenterprising Marshal Villeroi, the investment opened on July 6 under Cohorn's direction. It was fondly believed that the citadel was impregnable, and the place was well provisioned. Villeroi avenged himself by a bombardment of Brussels, but failed to draw William from before Namur. After a week's heavy bombardment, two assaults were delivered, on July 18

[1]Born in 1644, he served under Condé and Turenne, and became Marshal in 1693. After Namur, he was created a Peer of France for his defence of Lille against Prince Eugene in 1708, and he conducted the masterly retreat of the French army after Malplaquet in 1709. He died at Fontainebleau in 1711.

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and 27 respectively, and a partial success gained at heavy loss of life. Lord Cutts led the English Guards in these onslaughts. Boufflers led a heroic sortie but was repulsed. A refusal to surrender was followed by a terrific bombardment from 66 guns and 60 mortars, and this by an assault at four points simultaneously; the garrison were reduced from 15,000 to 5000. At length, being assured of the definite retreat of Villeroi's army, the Governor felt compelled to capitulate, and on August 26, 1695, Boufflers' tattered and blood-stained remnant marched out with the honours of war. To the Marshal's indignation, he was held prisoner because Louis XIV. had broken faith in detaining two garrisons captured by Villeroi ; but on this representation being made to Louis, he released the prisoners, and Boufflers was set free. He was at once created a Duke and treated like a conqueror. On the side of the Allies orders were issued for a public day of thanksgiving for the surrender of the fortress, both in England and on the Continent.

Returning temporarily to Ghent after the capitulation of Namur, Leveson's Regiment was engaged, in 1696, as part of the army of Flanders, under the Prince de Vaudemont's command, in the defence of the Flemish maritime provinces. Thus passed most of the summer months, facing the enemy, with desultory skirmishing, across the canal from Ghent to Bruges. Early in October the Regiment returned once more to the latter city for its third successive winter in this war zone. Rejoining King William's main army in the spring of 1697, it crossed the Scheldt near Dendermond in May and halted at St. Quentin Linneck.

One of its squadrons was involved in a particularly smart little affair on June 8. Having been dispatched to act as escort to a foraging party, the troopers fell in with a force of the French estimated at 100 strong – 60 carbineers and

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40 dragoons. In the resulting charge the enemy ranks were completely ridden through, their losses amounting to 20 killed or wounded, and 3 officers and 40 men captured.[1]

Moving on with the army to Brussels, the Regiment was next quartered at Wavre. The Peace of Ryswick now happily permitted a return to England, where, arriving in November, the Regiment was sent in the first instance to Yorkshire. A few weeks subsequently, however, it sailed from Liverpool for Dublin, where, arriving in March 1698, it was employed in garrison duties in the Green Isle for a considerable period. It was indeed during their Irish commission that the Regiment lost their Colonel (by this time promoted to be Lieut.-General Leveson) by death. The choice of a successor fell upon Colonel Daniel Harvey, then acting as Lieutenant-Colonel of the corps now known as the 2nd Life Guards. His new commission bore date March 25, 1699.

Participation in a new continental war was soon to be the lot of the '3rd Horse.'

[1] *London Gazette*, 1697.

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CHAPTER IV

The War of the Spanish Succession, 1704–10

The Peace of Ryswick proved to be little more than a truce. The power of France was unbroken and the ambitious policy of Louis XIV. made the question of who should succeed to the crown of Spain on the death of the childless and aged Charles III. a serious matter. Among likely claimants was Philip, Duke of Anjou, the grandson of Louis and his Spanish queen. There were fears that with a Bourbon Prince on the Spanish throne, Spain and the Indies would become dependencies of the French monarchy.

Other possible claimants in right of descent from Spanish princesses were the Archduke Charles of Austria and Prince Joseph Ferdinand of Bavaria. A compromise treaty, to which William III. and Louis XIV. were parties, arranged that the Bavarian claimant should succeed, but this was nullified by his early death. A second treaty was then arranged, giving the succession to the Archduke, and compensating King Louis by promising him the cession of the Spanish possessions in Italy. But when, on November 1, 1700, the Spanish King died, after signing during his last illness a will naming the Duke of Anjou as his successor, Louis XIV. declared that the will of King Charles overruled the treaty, and the young Bourbon Prince set out for Madrid, where he was welcomed by the Spanish people.

Austria refused to recognise his accession and declared for the claim of the Archduke Charles, and Prince Eugene was send to command an Austrian army in Italy and seize the Spanish territories there for 'King Charles III.'

In England opinion was divided, and there was a widespread reluctance to engage in a new continental war.

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Peace with France might have been preserved but for the aggressive action of Louis. The line of the frontier fortress of the Spanish Netherlands from Ostend to Luxemburg had for some time been held by joint Dutch and Spanish garrisons for the mutual safeguarding of both the Spanish territory and that of the Dutch United Provinces. At Brussels the Duke of Bavaria resided as Governor for Spain. King Louis entered into a secret arrangement with him for the seizure of the barrier line. On a night in December, French troops appeared suddenly before Mons, Namur and Luxemburg, and with the help of the Spanish garrisons compelled the Dutch contingents to withdraw. Helpless to meet this sudden aggression, made without warning or declaration of war, the Dutch Government withdrew its contingents from the other barrier garrisons, and prepared to defend themselves if Holland itself was menaced. William III. sent Marlborough, with 10,000 British troops, to their assistance.

But England still hesitated to plunge into war, and it was not until the following September, 1701, that the Treaty was signed by which England, Holland and Austria entered into the 'Grand Alliance' to support the Austrian claim, and curb the ambition of the French King. The day before the Treaty was signed James II. of England died at St. Germain, and his son was promptly recognised by Louis as 'King James III. of England and VIII. of Scotland.'

Thus began the long 'War of the Spanish Succession,' which lasted for twelve eventful years, with much fighting in Flanders, Germany, Italy and Spain, and on and beyond the seas. In the main theatre of war Marlborough gathered the laurels of Ramilies and Blenheim, Malplaquet and Oudenarde. But our Regiment took no part in the operations till the war had been nearly three years in progress.

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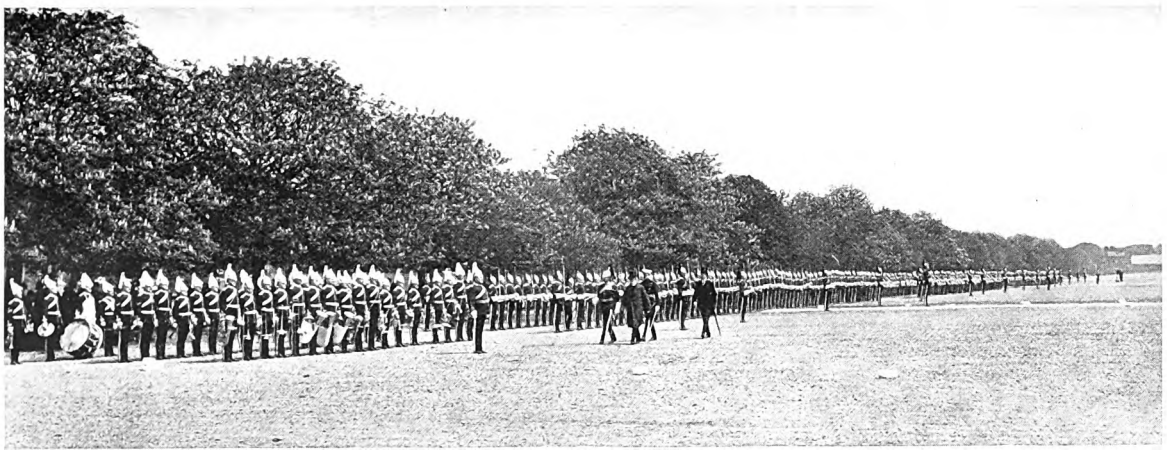

INSPECTION OF THE REGIMENT BY GENERAL SIR W. SEYMOUR, COLONEL OF THE REGIMENT. ALDERSHOT

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In the summer of 1703, Portugal had joined the alliance, and the English Government decided to send an expeditionary force to Lisbon, which, it was hoped, would escort the Austrian Archduke to Madrid as 'King Charles III. of Spain.' There was also to be a Dutch contingent, a Portuguese force and a small body of Spanish partisans of the Archduke's claim. The Bays, now known as the 3rd Horse, or Harvey's, were detailed for the expedition.

The command of the force was given to the Duke of Schomberg, the son of the famous soldier who fell at the Boyne. The Duke was a leader of little capacity, and probably owed his appointment to the popularity of his name in Portugal, where more than thirty years earlier his father had taken a prominent part in the War of Independence that freed the country from Spanish rule. Major-General Harvey, the Colonel of the Bays, commanded the cavalry of the little army, which was organised as follows:

The Duke of Schomberg, Commander-in-Chief.
Major-General Harvey, commanding the Cavalry.
Major-General Lord Portmore, } commanding Infantry
Major-General Wyndham, } Brigade.

Cavalry – Major-General Harvey's (now 2nd Dragoon Guards).
The Royal Regiment, the 1st Royal Dragoons.

Infantry – The Queen Dowager's (2nd Foot).
Stewart's (9th Foot).
Stanhope's (11th Foot).
Barrymore's (13th Foot).
Blood's (17th Foot)
Duncannon's (33rd Foot).
Brudenell's and Mountjoy's (afterwards disbanded).
A contingent of 4000 Dutch troops.

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This reorganisation took some time, and then there were repeated delays while Schomberg, who seems to have failed to establish cordial relations with the Portuguese generals, debated with them the plan for the advance. Meanwhile an exceptionally able soldier, the Marshal Duke of Berwick (son of James II. and Marlborough's sister, Arabella Churchill) was collecting a formidable Franco-Spanish army on the frontier of Portugal. Weeks were wasted and nothing was done till the summer, when Schomberg was superseded by the arrival from England of one of William III.'s veterans, the French Huguenot, Ruvigny, whom William had made Earl of Galway and enriched with confiscated Irish lands. Galway decided upon an immediate advance through Leon into Castille. The march was covered by Harvey's Horse scouting well to the front. The border-line had hardly been crossed, with the line of advance directed in Ciudad Rodrigo, when it was discovered that Berwick was barring the way with an overwhelming force holding the line of the Agueda River. Galway decided, probably with good reason, that an attempt to force the position would be to court disaster. He fell back into Portugal, where the army went into winter quarters in the villages of the Alemtejo.

The Regiment did not quit Ireland until September 1703, and, owing to delays on the part of the fleet, it remained for several weeks in the Isle of Wight. The transports did not land their freight in the Tagus until March 1704, so that the expedition had been *en route* for half a year.

Trouble immediately commenced in the matter of mounting the 3rd Horse. Their own horses had been left at home, on the understanding that the King of Portugal could and would supply them with better mounts. It was found, however, that the French had already bought up all

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the really useful horseflesh in Portugal for the use of their own troops in Spain. Accordingly, General Harvey found himself compelled to decline the very inferior horses provided, only about a score of them being at all fit for service. It was therefore in a dismounted state that the majority of the Regiment arrived at Abrantes in April, leaving about 120 of their own and Rhoos' (Dutch) Regiment, who were mounted, to advance to the Spanish border. At last it was reported that Major-General Harvey, 'having received orders to take by force all the horses that he should have occasion for to reinstate his Regiment upon paying a reasonable price for the same, has been so diligent therein that he has procured a sufficient number and has marched for the army.'[1]

Nothing was done till the following spring of 1705, when it was resolved to attempt an advance on Madrid by the southern route through Estramadura. Once more results were disappointing, though the campaign opened with some minor successes. The Regiment had joined general headquarters at Estremos on April 24, on the eve of the advance. It was engaged in covering the operations of two short but brilliantly successful sieges – that of Valencia, which was stormed on May 8, and that of Albuquerque, which capitulated on May 22. It then went into camp with the army on the left bank of the Chevora.

A gallant little affair took place on May 27. A superior force of French cavalry, having assailed one of our foraging parties and taken a number of mules, a squad numbering less then forty of the 3rd Horse rode up to try conclusions with the enemy. The latter were beaten off in disorder, and the mules and one prisoner taken from them.[2]

The next enterprise in which the Regiment engaged was

[1] *Present State of Europe.* [2] *London Gazette*, 1705.

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the unsuccessful siege of Badajos in the autumn of 1705. A relieving force managed to enter the fortress on October 14, and meanwhile Lord Galway had a hand struck off by a cannon-shot.[1] On the 14th also, the 3rd Horse were led in a brilliant charge by General Wyndham in person, the opponents being some Spanish cavalry, who were badly cut up and driven headlong across the Chevora River. But the siege of Badajos had to be abandoned, and another dreary winter was passed in quarters on the Spanish-Portuguese border.

The campaign of 1706 opened more successfully, largely because Peterborough was keeping the enemy busy with his daring operations in the eastern Mediterranean provinces of Spain, where he secured Barcelona and Valencia. On March 31, another advance from Portugal began. Here the allied army was about 17,000 strong, chiefly made up of Portuguese troops under General das Minas. The British contingent under Galway was less than 3000 strong – the Bays and five infantry battalions. The Allies offered battle to Berwick in the neighbourhood of Brocas. This challenge was refused, and Berwick, who had only a small force, retired along the road to Careares, but not without a dashing display of the Regiment. In concert with some Portuguese and Dutch horse, they charged into the retiring foe and emerged with 80 prisoners, who included the Conde de Vanilleros and General Don Diego Mouroy.[2] The Regiment then assisted in the occupation of the rock-town of Alcantara, in Estremadura, where 4000 prisoners were taken. A bad blunder was at this time committed by the enemy in temporarily recalling Berwick to France, whence they were only too glad to bring him back before long.

[1]The number of deaths and wounds from cannon-balls in these wars was surprisingly great, and many of them at close ranges.

[2]*London Gazette*, 1706.

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On May 1, Lord Galway drove his antagonists from the Tudar River, when the 3rd Horse aided in a substantial success by blowing up the bridge of Almaraz. The advance was slow. Relations between Galway and Das Minas were not good, and the Portuguese behaved badly, plundering the villages and preparing the way for future trouble. Cuidad Rodrigo was occupied after a mere show of resistance on May 26, and on June 1 the advance reached Salamanca. With the Bays forming the advanced guard, the Anglo-Portuguese army now marched eastwards on Madrid. The Guadarama Pass was secured without any opposition, and on June 24 the Bays occupied the northern outskirts of the Spanish capital. On the 27th the main body marched in. The inhabitants 'came in crowds to the camp with music and dancing,' and the Archduke Charles was proclaimed King of Spain – in his absence.

The possession of Madrid did not last long. Most of its people were on the side of the Bourbon King, and even those who had welcomed Galway's army were soon disgusted by the indiscipline and misconduct of his Portuguese allies. There were hopes that Peterborough, who now had the Archduke Charles with him, would join hands from the east side, but Charles insisted in a long northerly march, in the hope of rallying new partisans. Galway moved out north-eastwards to Guadalajara to join hands with him, but when the Austrian and Peterborough at last arrived, they had only some 3000 men with them. Meanwhile, Berwick had been strongly reinforced from France, and from the Portuguese border up to Madrid the Spaniards were declaring for King Philip, and Galway's line of communications with his Portuguese base simply ceased to exist. Berwick was approaching Madrid, and the position of the Anglo-Portuguese force became perilous. Early in August it was decided that the only way of saving the situation was

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to abandon Madrid, and retire eastward on Valencia, where the British Mediterranean Fleet would guarantee a safe base of supplies. The allied line of retirement led across the Tagus through the region of La Mancha – the country of Don Quixote – into Valencia, where they went into winter quarters at the end of September. Thus the 3rd Horse, in the course of one unsatisfactory campaign, had marched some 450 miles from its starting-point, Badajos.

We now come to a dark period in the history of the Regiment. For the campaign of 1707, Lord Galway conceived it his duty – although in dire need of almost everything in the way of supplies – to attempt a bold initiative as against Berwick's[1] strong and well-equipped array. He and Das Minas also had orders from King Charles – who took care to remain in Catalonia himself – to defend the borders of Aragon and Valencia. They were in the act of laying siege to Velina in early April when information was received of Berwick's advance, and the inevitable clash came about on the 25th, close to the town of Almanza.

'Harvey's Horse' were on this occasion led into action by Lieut.-Colonel Roper, and generally speaking the British cavalry were greatly depleted. A march of 15 miles through difficult country fatigued the troops, who were already jaded when they faced the Franco-Spanish position at three in the afternoon. As an auspicious beginning, the Portuguese cavalry fled from the field at the first charge! Fortunately, the Anglo-British resistance was made of sterner stuff. Ordered to charge two battalions that were temporarily 'in the air' and unsupported, Colonel Roper's troopers carried out their orders so thoroughly that they rode right through the hostile infantry, inflicting heavy losses. Unfortunately, in the impetus of the charge, they

[1]This great leader, and natural son of James II., was killed by a cannon-shot at the siege of Philipsbourg in 1734, aged sixty-four.

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got out of hand, and in their turn suffered heavily, the enemy being strongly reinforced. In this sanguinary mêlée the Regiment had Colonel Roper, Captain Nicholson and Lieutenant Bridger killed; Lieutenant Gee, Cornet Broughton and Quartermaster Sarden wounded and captured.[1] In the result the Allies suffered a severe defeat. Lord Galway managed to rally about 2500 cavalry, including the 3rd, at Alcira, but the main body of infantry, retreating to the hilly country around Caudet, were hemmed in and taken prisoners next day. The battle of Almanza lasted six hours. Lord Galway was twice wounded, Das Minas once, and the latter's mistress, 'fighting as an amazon,' was killed; among the wounded were Lord Tyrawley, Lord Mark Ker and Colonel Clayton. The loss of the victors was about 2000. 'In this action,' says Sir John Fortescue, 'Galway lost about 4000 killed and wounded and 3000 prisoners. The British alone lost 88 officers killed and 286 captured, of whom 92 were wounded. . . . The simple fact was that, as the bulk of the Portuguese would not fight, the action resolved itself into an attack of 8000 British, Dutch and Germans upon thrice their number of French and Spaniards in an open plain; and the defeat, though decisive, was in no sense disgraceful except to the Portuguese.'[2]

After Almanza, the activities of the Anglo-Portuguese forces were practically confined to Catalonia for many months, and the campaign languished. The Regiment was, however, reinforced from home, and speedily made good its losses in men and horses. According to the author of *The Present State of Europe*,[3] 'the Regiment of Horse of General Harvey is certainly one of the finest that ever was

[1] No record has been discovered of the losses in the rank and file.

[2] *History of the British Army*, vol. i.

[3] Chap. xix. p. 225.

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seen, and the worst horse they have is worth fifty pistoles. The Comte de Noyelles, Portuguese commander in Catalonia, who reviewed that Regiment some days before his death, was so well pleased with it that he returned thanks to Colonel Goring[1] and to the rest of the officers, and told them that in his letter to the Duke of Marlborough he would take particular notice of the good condition wherein he had found it.'

The years 1708–9 passed comparatively uneventfully in this theatre of war. The opposing armies for the most part 'observed' each other, and the Regiment, with occasional skirmishing, occupied a position about 30 miles from Tarragona during some months of 1708. In the ensuing August it crossed the river Segre as a unit of the contingent which then laid siege to and captured the towns of Balaguer and Ager. King Philip made a feint of advancing in force during this operation, but, nothing taking place, the Allies garrisoned the captured towns and withdrew.

For the campaign of 1710, Lieut.-General Stanhope led the British forces in Spain, *vice* Lord Galway. Both of the rival 'Kings' of that country were now in the field, and on June 10, King Charles reviewed the English army near Balaguer, when Harvey's Horse made an especially attractive showing. Two days later King Philip advanced in force, but, with an infirmity of purpose fully equal to that of his rival Charles, he fell back to Belcayne, after having suffered several hundred casualties from the fire of our batteries. It was at this juncture that General Stanhope in person, perceiving that the enemy's right wing was exposed in the act of retirement, charged with the 3rd Horse and inflicted considerable damage. Their retrograde movement thus accelerated, the Franco-Spanish army eventually took up a position near Lérida. On July 26, Stanhope set off, at

[1]Temporarily commanding the corps after Lieut.-Colonel Roper's fall.

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the head of the 3rd and other cavalry, to take possession of the pass of Alfaras, a strategic point of commanding importance. This movement was the prelude to the battle of Almanara on the 27th, which was essentially an affair of cavalry.

General Stanhope found himself considerably in advance of his main body, and also discovered that the enemy had secured the advantage of position by seizing a plateau overlooking Almanara. Directly the main army had come up, the gallant if impetuous Stanhope charged at the head of only sixteen squadrons, albeit the odds against him amounted to a first line of twenty-two squadrons and a church held by infantry, and a second line of nine battalions and twenty squadrons! The General placed himself in front of the 3rd Horse's right squadron and, with the ground quite favourable for cavalry fighting, a magnificent hand-to-hand struggle ensued. Stanhope was seen in personal combat with an officer who, it was said, was afterwards found dead and identified as General Amenzega.[1] It was a glorious day for the Regiment. After smashing through and routing the first line, our astonishing cavalry dashed on to repeat the process with the second line. King Philip's household cavalry fought well, but lost their flag and kettle-drums, while the Regiment of Grenada also lost its standard – for the infantry speedily joined in the wild stampede, at the sacrifice of their weapons, ammunition and tents. An intensely dark night probably preserved them from utter destruction, it being impossible to take large numbers of prisoners under those conditions. The victorious army camped temporarily on the battlefield, afterwards carrying the war into Aragon.

Whereas the discomfited enemy admitted heavy losses (though these were never properly returned), the British

[1]Statement by the Envoy of Savoy, who was an eye-witness.

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casualties worked out at only 73 troopers killed and 113 wounded. Doubtless owing to the fury of the charge, however, our loss in officers was considerable, as follows: Brigadier-Generals the Count of Nassau and Lord Rochfort, Colonel Travers, Captain La Porte, Cornets Webb and Garson, and a Quartermaster (killed); Generals Stanhope and Carpenter, Lieut.-Colonel Bland, Captains Willis, Moor, Ravenel and Naison, and Lieutenants Jobber, Wood, Heron and Patterson, Cornets Du Case and Wildgoose, and a Quartermaster (wounded).

The rival monarchs both graced the next battlefield with their presence, though not perhaps to any useful purpose. Having crossed the Ebro, the two armies came together again on August 20, in front of Saragossa, where King Philip's forces occupied a favourable position, with their left wing resting on the river; their strength was estimated at forty battalions and sixty squadrons. For a while the battle was desperately contested, and the 3rd and other cavalry were held in reserve until there were signs of the enemy giving way. They were 'let loose' when the conflict had been in progress about two hours, and the Regiment played a leading rôle in the successful charges and subsequent pursuit. The prizes included 22 guns and ammunition, camp-equipage and King Philip's service of plate; whereas not more than a few hundred killed and wounded fell on the Anglo-Portuguese side. Mr. Burton (secretary) wrote from the scene of action:

'We have beat them entirely out of the field, leaving behind them 5000 prisoners and near 4000 killed, with all their cannon and ammunition and about 200 coulers and standards. This victory hast not cost us 600 men.'[1]

A month later, on September 21, this decisive success led to the reoccupation of Madrid, the capital being entered

[1] *Strafford Papers*, vol. ii.

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and garrisoned by the British. Now was the time for the boldest of initiatives, and General Stanhope urged upon King Charles the vital necessity for uniting with the other Portuguese and English contingent, under Count Staremberg, then operating on the border of Portugal. But all in vain: Stanhope's representations failed utterly, and, though without the smallest reason for so doing, the Portuguese commanders withdrew into winter quarters.

As if this were not enough, the faint-hearted King Charles, on hearing that the remnant of the enemy army defeated at Saragossa had been rallied in Estramadura and heavily reinforced, retreated post-haste to Barcelona. In truth, the Duc de Vendôme, with King Philip as his nominal commander, had been ordered from France at the head of fresh and powerful forces, supported by large numbers of armed peasants and other auxiliaries. By the opening of November (1710) Vendôme's army was already in touch with Stanhope, who, sadly depleted in numbers and material of war, had no alternative but to abandon Madrid. His retreat was harassed by a hostile peasantry, who plundered at every turn and refused him food and forage; his men were without tents in an already terribly cold winter, and he was close pressed by Vendôme. His strength was reduced to not more than 5000. He directed the line of retreat, by the Tajuma River, with a force made up of the 3rd Horse, Pepper's Dragoons, Stanhope's Dragoons, a squadron of Royal Dragoons, a battalion of Foot Guards and skeletons of seven infantry battalions.

The brave Stanhope, who had attempted in vain to gain touch with the Portuguese under Staremberg, reached the picturesque village of Brihuega on December 6–7. It is situated on a mountain-side close to the Tajuma. The British General had not the least idea that the hostile peasantry had apprised Vendôme of his exact movements,

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and that he had deliberately marched into a trap. Suddenly, on the evening of the 7th, and while preparing to resume their retrograde movement, the British were hemmed in by a force of infantry and cavalry estimated at ten times their own strength. The village was practically defenceless, while the British were without artillery and short of ammunition. Yet they fought with a devoted courage, repulsing the first assault and keeping up a fusillade of rocks and stones after the failure of their ammunition. At last arrived a moment when resistance became no longer possible, and General Stanhope found himself compelled to surrender his little band as prisoners of war. Even so, the enemy admitted a loss of 2000 casualties.

Not more than 2228 effectives of all ranks were included in this capitulation at Brihuega, and among them figured Lieut.-Generals Stanhope, Wills and Carpenter, Major-General Pepper (commanding 'Pepper's Dragoons') and Brigadier-General Gore. They remained in captivity for several months until exchanged, the Regiment returning to England in the ensuing October of 1711, and being temporarily quartered at Kingston-on-Thames during the process of recruiting and re-mounting.

Thus ended the attempt to place the Austrian King Charles upon the throne of Spain – an attempt always doomed to failure by reason of his own timidity and total lack of initiative. It was a thousand pities, in all the circumstances, that so much British blood and money had been expended to so little purpose.

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CHAPTER V

The Risings of 1715 and 1745

On New Year's Day 1712, Colonel John Bland was gazetted to the command of the 3rd Horse. In the following November the corps was sent over to Ireland, where for nearly three years it led the routine existence of a garrison regiment, partly in Dublin and partly at other centres, route-marching and participating in reviews, inspections and suchlike ceremonial parades.

The Regiment received yet another new commander in 1715, Colonel Thomas Pitt (afterwards Earl of Londonderry) being appointed on February 9. A few months later it was ordered home from Ireland, the threat of a rising in the North in favour of the Chevalier de St. George's pretensions to the English throne having alarmed the Government of George I. into taking elaborate precautions. These included the recruiting of eight new regiments of infantry and thirteen of cavalry. The greatest partisan of the Chevalier's cause in the Highlands, the Earl of Mar, was possessed of no military capacity whatsoever. But he held full powers to act for the 'Old Pretender' and, as the sequel to a gathering of the Scottish nobility and leading clansmen convened by him, he had some 10,000 Highlanders under arms in the late autumn of 1715. But he had chosen a bad time for the movement, and once it began he showed little energy, gave the Government abundant time for preparation before he risked a battle, and then, though he was superior in numbers, showed so little leadership and energy that the result was inconclusive. It discouraged his followers, and after this the rising in Scotland was easily trampled out.

He had hoped for a simultaneous movement in England,

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where there was undoubtedly widespread discontent at the accession of the Hanoverian King. But the Government was on the alert, and imprisoned large numbers of country gentlemen in the North and West, who were suspected of disaffection to the new regime. Two men of wealth and influence, the Earl of Derwentwater in Cumberland and Mr. Foster, a Northumbrian squire, on being menaced with arrest, assembled their friends and tenantry in an attempt to surprise Newcastle. Foster joined Derwentwater, and having had some military experience took command of the Jacobite forces. They were joined by other local men of mark, and found some serviceable recruits among the hardy countryfolk of the Scottish border. They marched south into Lancashire, occupying Lancaster without opposition. They hoped to gain many adherents in the county, and that their advance would encourage a rising in the western counties and in Wales.

It was against this English rising that the Bays were employed. After they landed at Hoylake in Cheshire in the early summer, they had been sent into Staffordshire to support the Government in keeping the local Jacobites from any rash action. On the same mission they moved first into Lancashire and then back to Cheshire, where they had been some months in billets when the northern rising began. On the news of the southward march of General Foster's Jacobite army, Major-General Wills, who commanded in Cheshire, was ordered to oppose the rebel advance with such forces as were immediately available. He was able to get together only about 2000 men, mostly mounted troops. Wills had two old regular regiments, the 3rd Horse (Queen's Bays) and the 26th Foot. The rest were new dragoon formations greatly under strength, the Regiments of Honeywood (afterwards 11th Light Dragoons), Munden (afterwards 13th Dragoons), Dormer (afterwards 14th

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Dragoons), Wynne (afterwards 9th Lancers) and Stanhope (subsequently disbanded). The enemy were reported to be about 5000 strong. Of these a thousand were new recruits obtained in Lancashire. Foster had a few light cannon, but his forces were badly armed and equipped, and mostly without either military training or experience. As Wills moved northwards, the Jacobites had reached the Ribble Valley. On November 12, they threw themselves into Preston, deciding to make a stand there. They neglected to secure the bridge over the river, but they barricaded the entrance of the town and loopholed the houses.

Wills promptly attacked. Using part of his mounted troops to watch all the approaches and exits of the town, he attacked with his one infantry unit and dismounted detachments of his cavalry. The 3rd Horse were thus employed chiefly in the attack along the Manchester-Preston road. While the action was in progress, Wills was reinforced by General Carpenter with about a thousand fresh troops.

The barricades first encountered were carried with a rush, but a hot fusillade from the houses temporarily held up the advance, and then the Government troops succeeded in setting fire to some of the wooden houses of the streets barred by the Jacobites. This had the desired effect, and between the flames and the heavy volleys of the assailants the resistance died down. During the night – a veritable night of horror – the Regiment guarded the crossings of the Ribble, and here they cut down a number of the defenders who attempted to fight their way out. At daylight on the 14th the remnant surrendered at discretion, when it was found that their numbers had dwindled to rather less than 1500, doubtless chiefly from desertions. Their leaders included upwards of 100 men of rank, several of whom, including the Earl of Derwentwater, were afterwards arraigned for high treason and put to death.

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Although serving in the van of the assault, the total casualties of the Regiment amounted only to 1 man and 2 horses wounded. For that matter, the whole of General Wills's losses were but 3 officers killed and 13 wounded; 53 men killed and 81 wounded; no fewer than 48 horses were killed and 41 injured. The 3rd remained to garrison Preston until the autumn of the following year, 1716, when it received orders to march south to be billeted around Windsor and Staines. In November it was reviewed in Hyde Park by the Prince of Wales, afterwards George II., and together with the Life Guards it supplied Royal escorts.

The Regiment received the thanks of King George I. for its services at Preston, as well as the honour of the fresh designation of Princess of Wales' Own Regiment of Horse. (The Prince of Wales had married the Princess Caroline of Anspach in 1705.) The strength of the Regiment at this time amounted to 28 officers, 6 quartermasters, 12 corporals, 6 buglers and 240 troopers. It was reduced in strength by 90 men in 1718.

The years 1717–8 and 1719–20 were uneventful. For the twelvemonth, May 1717 to April 1718, the corps was peacefully quartered along the Kentish coast, and then for several months in Bedfordshire, with a detachment in Cornwall. It next went on a route-march into Warwickshire, and in 1720 was diverted into Bucks and Beds, followed by another period of Royal escort duty. In the spring of 1722 it went into camp around Andover, Hants, and on August 30 ensuing, the King held an elaborate review of four cavalry regiments and seven infantry battalions on Salisbury Plain. The mounted men then reviewed comprised the Princess of Wales' – Ward's Regiment (afterwards 3rd Dragoon Guards), Evans's (afterwards 4th Dragoons) and Gore's Regiment (afterwards 10th Dragoons). Immediately after this the Regiment

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escorted the King to Winchester and Portsmouth, where he held a naval review; and in the autumn it moved to the neighbourhood of Newbury, to be cantoned in Northamptonshire and Bucks, and then nearer to London, for the winter of 1723–4. A further movement to the Midlands, chiefly Coventry and Warwick, preceded successive quarters in Devonshire and Northants in 1726–7.

Colonel Pitt having become Earl of Londonderry and retired from the command, the Regiment received one of its most notable commanding officers in John, Duke of Argyll, by commission dated August 26, 1726. Born in 1678, he had fought under Marlborough at Ramillies, Oudenarde and Malplaquet, but afterwards intrigued against that great commander and assisted in his dismissal. He was created 'Duke of Greenwich' in 1718 and a Field-Marshal some years subsequently. The Duke survived until 1743, and for his kindly personal qualities was known as 'the good Duke of Argyll.' Some interesting facts concerning him may be found in Scott's *Heart of Midlothian*.

The death of George I. in June 1727, and the consequent accession in rank of the Princess of Wales as Queen, caused the designation of the Regiment to be altered from Princess's to Queen's Own Royal Regiment of Horse. Very shortly afterwards, the corps was called upon to provide forty troopers as a guard of honour to King George II. on July 27.[1] This occasion was a review by the new monarch of the Life Guards and Horse Grenadier Guards in Hyde Park, and, including the 'Queen's Guard' and 'Princesses' Guard,' the Regiment furnished 72 officers and men in all. On August 2 ensuing, it was reviewed by the King, the Queen being present, at Kew Green, when the smart appearance of men and horses was widely acclaimed.[2]

[1] The anniversary of the Regiment's brilliant charge at Almanara in 1710.
[2] *London Gazette*, 1727.

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During the next decade or so, the life of the Regiment was the routine one of 'camps and quarters.' Early in 1728 they were sent to Nottingham and Stamford for a twelve-month, and in the ensuing year were again quartered in Warwickshire. Returning to the metropolitan area in the spring of 1730, they supplied a squadron for 'police' duty at the Royal review of the Guards in Hyde Park on May 20, and themselves had the honour of being reviewed by the monarch (together with the 'King's Own Regiment of Horse'[1]) at Datchet Common on June 24. At the New Year of 1731, Wade's Horse[2] replaced them on Royal escort duty, and they were removed to Kent and Sussex in the first instance, thence to Notts, Derbyshire and Bedfordshire (1731–3).

In August 1733, His Grace of Argyll accepting a Horse Guards appointment, the Queen's Regiment received a new Colonel in the person of Lieut.-General William Evans of the 4th Dragoons, a distinguished veteran of the War of the Spanish Succession, etc.

The itinerary of their peace-time 'operations' in the next few years was: in 1734–5, in Huntingdonshire, Shropshire and Cheshire; in 1735–6, at Newcastle and Burton-on-Trent, wintering in 'Shakespeare's Country'; in 1736, on familiar ground at Northampton and the adjacent county of Bucks. At the opening of 1737 they took over from the King's Regiment the Royal escort work, which involved mounting guards for King George's reviews of the household troops in June and of the Foot Guards in July. Wade's Horse having relieved them once more, they went into winter quarters in Warwickshire, but were located principally in Kent and Essex in 1738–9. The death of General Evans brought a fresh commander to the Regiment by

[1]Afterwards 1st Dragoon Guards.
[2]Afterwards 3rd Dragoon Guards.

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commission of May 6, 1740. This was Lieut.-General John, Duke of Montagu, scion of an illustrious line and son of one who had served William III. in the field.

A pleasant interlude was afforded by a few weeks' camping-out in Windsor Forest, and after a further term in quarters in Kent and Essex, the Queen's Regiment returned to the capital for escort duty in 1742. In the autumn of the ensuing year, they were in attendance upon the King and the Duke of Cumberland. This occasion was the return of George II. from the campaign of Dettingen, at which battle he had commanded the Allies and shown himself a gallant if not a highly scientific soldier.

Throughout this new continental war the Regiment was employed only on home service, but the following Royal Warrant, received by its Colonel, the Duke of Montagu, in 1744, tells how some of its troopers were drafted off as reinforcements for other cavalry regiments serving in Germany:

'George R. We having thought fit to Augment and Recruit Our several Regiments of Horse serving in Flanders with all Expedition, Our Will and Pleasure therefore is that you do forthwith make a Draught of Ten private men mounted out of every Troop in the Queen's Royal Regiment of Horse under your Command towards Augmenting and Recruiting the said Forces, which said Draughted men are to march to such place as shall be appointed, where they are to embark on Board such Transport ships as shall be ordered to receive them. Wherein the Civil Magistrates and all others concerned are to be assisting in providing Quarters, impressing Carriages and otherwise as there shall be occasion. Given at our Court of St. James's This 20th Day of January 1743/4 in the Seventeenth Year of Our Reign.

'By His Majesty's Command,

'Willm. Yonge.'[1]

[1]War Office Records, 26/20, p. 92.

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Next year the attempt of Prince Charles Edward Stuart, the 'Young Pretender,' to regain the throne of his grandfather, James II., brought a fresh call to arms to the Queen's Regiment. The time was well chosen for the rising, seeing that the bulk of the regular British Army was away on the Continent. However, many leading members of the peerage loyally recruited regiments in the time of crisis – notably the Duke of Montagu, who supplemented his share as Colonel of the Queen's Horse by raising two fresh regiments – 'Montagu's Horse,' otherwise the King's Carbineers, and an infantry battalion known as the Ordnance Regiment. Among other new formations figured a corps composed exclusively of members of the legal profession, with Lord-Justice Wills as their colonel. Field-Marshal Wade was appointed to command the forces for suppression of the rising, but the King announced that in the last resort he would take the field in person.

Prince Charles Edward entered Edinburgh in triumph, and defeated the Royal forces under Cope at Prestonpans. Marshal Wade established his headquarters at Doncaster, and the Queen's and other cavalry were ordered first to York and then to Newcastle (October 1745). Advancing southward, the Highland force contrived to elude Wade, who thereupon marched, *via* Durham and Darlington, for the protection of Yorkshire; on December 8 he was at Ferrybridge with the infantry, while his cavalry was at Doncaster. Here, however, intelligence was received of the precipitate retreat northwards of the enemy after penetrating as far as Derby. Marshal Wade now sent General Oglethorpe, with the Queen's Regiment and other cavalry, in pursuit, and they quitted Doncaster on December 10. To such good purpose did they ride, that the Queen's covered a hundred miles in three days[1] in the most terribly

[1] *London Gazette*, December 1745.

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inclement weather conditions – ice, snow, sleet and mud. A few stragglers from the disorganised Highland army were made prisoners.

The Regiment arrived at Preston – where they had served to such good purpose in the 1715 rising – on the 13th, and linked up with a body of cavalry from the Duke of Cumberland's main army, then hastening in pursuit. The rearguard of the fugitive force was overtaken at Clifton Moor in the neighbourhood of Penrith, and was very roughly handled by the Queen's Horse. The Jacobite army had halted for a short rest at Penrith, because on the bad roads and in the wretched winter weather its rearguard wanted time to bring up the transport. Cumberland's cavalry attacked after dark on the evening of December 29, and the rearguard, under Glengarry, held a position in close country on the margin of a moor, so as to cover Clifton Bridge. The MS. History of the Queen's Bays dismisses the action thus: 'The rearguard of the fugitive force was overtaken at Clifton Moor in the neighbourhood of Penrith and was very roughly handled by the Queen's Horse.' But, as a matter of fact, the Jacobites were not fugitives precisely. They were retiring in very good order, and the cavalry attack undoubtedly failed in its purpose of pushing on to Clifton Bridge and stopping the retreat of the transport, etc. The rearguard held its own so well that Cumberland never again ventured on such an attack. A good many of the English horsemen were, no doubt, themselves 'roughly handled' in the narrow, hedged and dark country lanes in which the attack was made. Some idea of the fighting may be derived from the account given of it in *Waverley*.

Continuing their retreat into Scotland, the enemy left a few Highlanders and the Manchester Regiment to hold Carlisle Castle. The city was occupied by King George's forces on December 30. For a while the Queen's were

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attached to the troops left there to capture the Castle, which soon surrendered. The Regiment was then sent back to York, and thus did not participate in Cumberland's sanguinary defeat of the enemy on Culloden Moor, any more than it had participated in the battle of Sheriffmuir in the '15 rising. Probably this was not regretted by either officers or men, for little glory was to be obtained in such a warfare.

Seeing that General Sir John Ligonier was destined to be the next commander of our Regiment, it seems worth while reproducing here a letter written, immediately after the battle of Culloden, by the Duke of Cumberland to that distinguished officer. It was in acknowledgment of the gift of a sword from Sir John to King George's 'martial fat boy': 'Would to God the enemy had been worthy enough for our troops. Sure never were soldiers in such a temper. Silence and Obedience the whole time, and all our manœuvres were perform'd without the least confusion. I must own that you have hit my weak side when you say that the honour of our troops is restored: that pleases beyond all the honours done me.'[1]

During 1746 took place the death, and burial at Coventry, of Quartermaster Arthur Manley, who had actually served in the Queen's Regiment for nearly half a century! The following was inscribed upon his tombstone in Coventry churchyard:

'Here lieth the body of Arthur Manley, late Quartermaster in the Queen's Royal Regiment of Horse, who served the Crown of Great Britain upwards of 56 years from the 15th of July 1685 to the 24th of August 1741. He died June 7th 1746, aged 78 years.

'The Israelites in Desert wandered but two score
But I have wandered two score sixteen and more,

[1]Stowe MSS., British Museum.

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In dusty Campaigns; restless days and nights
In bloody battles ofttimes did I fight,
In Ireland, Flanders, France and Spain.
At last here lies my poor mortal remains.

'I served in the Foot ten years, and in the above Regiment of Horse upwards of forty-six years.'

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CHAPTER VI

'The Second Dragoon Guards,' 1746 – The Seven Years' War, 1760–3

Christmas Day, 1746, was a momentous date in the Regiment's annals. It was then enacted that its future status and pay should be that of 'Dragoons' instead of 'Horse.' No changes took place in the higher ranks, but the regimental trumpeters were replaced by drummers and hautboy instrumentalists, while the corporals, troopers and trumpeters were given the choice of receiving their discharge, fourteen days' pay and a gratuity of £3 each, or of remaining with their regiment and being paid the gratuity. As regards equipment and uniform: carbines were replaced by muskets and bayonets, flask-strings were detached from pouch-belts and, generally speaking, equipment became that of the Dragoon. Alterations in uniform included (*a*) gold lace, embroidery and a silken sash of crimson over the left shoulder for the officers; (*b*) gold lace and silken sashes round the waist for the quartermasters; and (*c*) narrow lace on lapels, pockets and sleeves, and worsted sashes round the waist for the sergeants. The following is a copy of King George II.'s Warrant for the embodiment of this and two other famous mounted corps as Dragoon formations:

'George R.

'Whereas We have thought fit to order our own Regiment of Horse commanded by our trusty and well-beloved General Sir Philip Honeywood – The Queen's Royal Regiment of Horse commanded by our Right Trusty and right entirely beloved cousin and Counsellor Lieutenant General John Duke of Montagu; and our

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Regiment of Horse commanded by our right trusty and well beloved Counsellor Field Marshal George Wade – to be respectively formed into Regiments of Dragoons, and their establishment and pay as Dragoons to commence the 25th of December 1746. And whereas it is become necessary by the said Regiments being formed into Dragoons that their former titles as Regiments of Horse should be altered We are hereby graciously pleased to declare our Royal Will and Pleasure that our Regiment of Dragoons now under the command of General Sir Philip Honeywood shall bear the title of our "First Regiment of Dragoon Guards" Our Regiment of Dragoons now commanded by the Duke of Montagu the title of our "Second Regiment of Dragoon Guards" and our Regiment of Dragoons now commanded by Field Marshal Wade the title of our "Third Regiment of Dragoon Guards" and have rank and precedency of all other Regiments of Dragoons in our Service. Nevertheless Our further Will and Pleasure is that the said three Regiments of Dragoon Guards shall roll and do duty in our Army or upon detachments with our other forces as Dragoons in the same manner as if the word Guards was not inserted in their respective titles.

'Whereof the Colonels abovementioned and the Colonels of our said Regiments for the time being and all others whom it may or shall concern are to take notice and govern themselves accordingly.

'Given at our Court at St. James's this 9th day of January 1746–7 in the 20th year of our Reign.'

'By His Majesty's Command . . . H. Fox.'

The following table represented the establishment of the Regiment in its first year as Dragoon Guards:

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Staff Officers.	Per Diem.	Per Annum.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
The Colonel as Colonel, 15s.; Servants, 4s. 6d.	0 19 6	355 17 6
Lieutenant-Colonel as Lieutenant-Colonel	0 9 0	164 5 0
Major as Major	0 5 0	91 5 0
Chaplain	0 6 8	121 13 4
Surgeon	0 6 0	109 10 0
Adjutant	0 5 0	91 5 0
The First Troop.		
Captain, 8s.; 3 horses, 3s.; Servants, 4s. 6d.	0 15 6	282 17 6
Lieutenant, 4s.; 2 horses, 2s.; Servants, 3s.	0 9 0	164 5 0
Cornet, 3s.; 2 horses, 2s.; Servants, 3s.	0 8 0	146 0 0
Quartermaster for himself and horse, 4s.; Servants, 1s. 6d.	0 5 6	100 7 6
3 Sergeants, each 2s. 9d.	0 8 3	150 11 3
3 Corporals, each 2s. 3d.	0 6 9	123 3 9
2 Drummers, each 2s. 3d.	0 4 6	82 2 6
A Hautboy, 2s.	0 2 0	36 10 0
59 Dragoons at 1s. 9d. each for man and horse	5 3 3	1,884 6 3
Allowance to Widows	0 2 0	36 10 0
For clothing lost by Deserters	0 2 6	45 12 6
For recruiting expenses	0 2 4	42 11 8
For Agency	0 1 8	21 5 10
Five troops more of same number	42 13 9	15,580 18 9
	£53 15 8	£19,630 18 4

In 1747–9 the Regiment was quartered successively at Nottingham and Derby, at Bristol and in Somersetshire, and around Gloucester, Worcester and Pershore. While at the last-mentioned town, the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle was signed in 1748, whereupon a reduction in the strength of the Regiment took place amounting to 6 sergeants, 6 corporals and 138 men.

The Duke of Montagu passed away in 1749, and on July 24 the colonelcy was conferred upon a truly illustrious cavalry officer in General Sir John Ligonier, K.B. He was then acting as Colonel of the 4th Irish Horse, afterwards the 7th Dragoon Guards. Sir John had held high cavalry

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TROOPER, 1751

From the painting by Morier at Windsor Castle

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commands in practically all of Marlborough's great battles, to the success of which his prowess had contributed. He rose to the rank of Field-Marshal, and survived to the great age of ninety, dying in 1770. His command of the 2nd Dragoon Guards did not last long, as he was appointed Colonel of the Blues at the beginning of 1753, and a respectable veteran, Major-General the Hon. William Herbert, took his place (January 27, 1753).

During the autumn and winter of 1750–1, the Regiment was engaged in the duty of helping the Revenue officers of the Sussex coast to keep in check the smuggling 'industry' in that quarter. Smugglers were very active and reckless, and often very dangerous to tackle in those times. The cavalry patrols had not only to assist if need be in stopping actual landings, but also to cut off and capture the skilfully organised convoys of pack-horses with which the smugglers ran their goods far inland by a rapid night-march over the Downs. In 1751 a move was made into Essex and Kent, thence to Worcestershire, and in 1753–4 to Yorkshire and Scotland. The corps remained quartered in the latter country for several years.

There being unmistakable signs of a fresh breach with France, the personnel was appreciably augmented in 1755. While each troop of the Regiment was strengthened by the addition of a corporal and fifteen men, a Light Troop was added, making seven troops in all. Its functions were to be those of reconnoitring, outpost and skirmishing[1] and the

[1]In the armies of the eighteenth century these were the special duties assigned to the 'Light Horse.' There had long been a distinction between the regular cavalry, drilled for the mounted charge, and half-irregular corps that acted as scouts, looked after the outpost line, and went out as foragers. These received little formal drill. The Austrian troops of Croats and Hussars were originally of this type, as the Cossacks were in the Russian armies even in the early years of the nineteenth century. A 'Light Troop' formed in a regular regiment received a great deal of steady drill, but was chiefly relied on for duties originally entrusted to such irregulars.

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extra troop at first numbered 3 officers, 1 quartermaster, 2 sergeants, 3 corporals, 2 drummers and 60 troopers. Its strength was presently increased to 89 troopers, making exactly 100 men and officers.

The death of General Herbert taking place in 1757, on April 5 in that year Lord George Sackville was appointed Colonel. He came from the 3rd Irish Horse (subsequently the 6th Dragoon Guards), and he was not destined to hold his new position long. For the Seven Years' War having broken out, Lord George Sackville entirely failed to distinguish himself at the otherwise glorious battle of Minden. In fact, his failure to take the cavalry into action on that day led to this rebuke from the Commander-in-Chief, Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick: 'If His Serene Highness had had the good fortune to have had Lieut.-General the Marquis of Granby[1] at the head of the cavalry of the right wing, his presence would have greatly contributed to make the success of the battle more complete and brilliant.' This compelled Lord George's return to England, where a court-martial consisting of eleven lieut.-generals and four major-generals decided that he was 'unfit to serve His Majesty in any military capacity whatever' – and George II. in person erased his name from the list of Privy Councillors. Nevertheless, wrote Horace Walpole, 'this is not the last we shall hear of him.' Sure enough, as Lord George Germain he was afterwards Colonial Secretary in the North Cabinet, and 'shared in the blunders which cost Great Britain her American colonies.'

Curiously, there was no lack of personal courage on Lord George's part – he had been severely wounded at Fontenoy and had engaged in two or three desperate duels. As, however, there was no doubt as to the verdict of the court-martial that sat upon his case, his colonelcy of the Regiment

[1]He was second in command to Sackville.

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lapsed automatically, and he was replaced by the Hon. John (afterwards Lord) Waldegrave by commission dated September 10, 1759. The 2nd Dragoon Guards had now had four colonels within ten years.

The Regiment now welcomed the opportunity of active service afforded by the Seven Years' War, after so long an interval of service at home. Having been in quarters in Yorkshire and Lincolnshire in 1758–9, it was ordered south, and then, in April 1760, was warned for continental service. It sailed from the Thames in May, and disembarked near Bremen on the 17th. After a long march it joined the Anglo-German army commanded by Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick, whose headquarters were at that time (June 14, 1760) established at Fritzlar in the Electorate of Mentz. The 2nd were immediately brigaded with the 1st and 3rd Dragoon Guards under command of Brigadier-General Webb, and an opening skirmish took place near Cortach on July 10.

By the 27th, Prince Ferdinand's advance had reached Kalle in Hesse-Cassel, and it was resolved to attack the Chevalier de Muy,[1] who with some 35,000 French occupied a strongly fortified position on an eminence near Warburg, on the opposite bank of the river Dymer. Near midnight on the 30th the river was crossed, and very early next morning the cavalry advanced directly against the Warburg position, while a division led by Prince Ferdinand in person endeavoured to turn the French left. In this he was completely successful, and now occurred the opportunity for a big cavalry stroke. The whole of Ferdinand's British contingent had come under the fighting Marquis of Granby's command since the retirement of Lord George Sackville.

[1] 'M. de Muy is a very honest man and a good Christian, but as he is not a good General, the Service will suffer.' Letter from Versailles, August 4, 1760 (*Hardwicke Papers*).

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After a five-mile ride over broken ground, Lord Granby's horsemen found themselves in presence of the enemy.

Their charge has been eloquently described by Sir John Fortescue: 'The pace was checked for a brief moment as the squadrons formed in two lines for the attack. In the first line from right to left were the 1st, 3rd and 2nd Dragoon Guards in one brigade; the Blues, 7th and 6th Dragoon Guards in another; in the second line were the Greys, 10th, 6th and 11th Dragoons. Then the advance was resumed, Granby riding at the head of the Blues, his own regiment, and well in front of all. His hat flew from his head, revealing a bald head which shone conspicuous in the sun, as the trot grew into gallop and the lines came thundering on. The French squadrons wavered for a moment and then, with the exception of three only, turned and fled without awaiting the shock. The scarlet ranks promptly wheeled round upon the flank and rear of the French infantry; whereupon the three French squadrons that had stood firm plunged gallantly down on the flank of the King's Dragoon Guards and overthrew them. But the Blues quickly came up to liberate their comrades, and the devoted little band of Frenchmen was cut to pieces.'[1]

In this victory of Warburg (which, incidentally, convinced many continental critics that Prince Ferdinand was the greatest of contemporary military leaders) the Queen's Regiment had 3 N.C.O.'s and 9 troopers killed; Captain Arnott, Lieutenant Mattock, Cornet Cullendar, 1 N.C.O. and 10 troopers wounded; and 20 horses – 10 killed, 2 injured, 8 missing.

The French losses in killed, wounded and prisoners were estimated at 5000 to 7000.[2] 'It appears by M. Broglie's last letters,' says a letter from Versailles of September 4,

[1] *History of the British Army*, vol. ii.

[2] Officially, we took 2000 prisoners at Warburg. Our own loss was only 1200.

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1760,[1] 'that the loss of ye action of Warbourg, the several skirmishes, sickness and desertion have so weaken'd his Army and discourag'd the Troops, that it is not prudent to risk another action.' For the battle was so decisive that in an Order of the Day Prince Ferdinand thanked Lord Granby and the mounted troops in the following handsome terms:

'His Serene Highness again renews his compliments of thanks to the Generals, Officers, Regiments and Corps who were engaged, and who, by their valour and excellent conduct, gained so complete a victory over the Enemy; and again orders his thanks to be publicly given to Lord Granby under whose orders all the British Cavalry performed prodigies of valour' (*General Orders by the Duke of Brunswick*).

The Marquis of Granby in his Dispatch observes:

'I should do injustice to the General Officers and to every Officer and private man of the Cavalry if I did not beg your Lordship would assure His Majesty that nothing could exceed their gallant behaviour on that occasion' (*London Gazette*).

Lord Holderness, Secretary of State, wrote as follows to Lord Granby on receipt of news of the battle: 'I am by His Majesty's Command to acquaint your Lordship that the King has the greatest satisfaction in the gallant behaviour of His British Troops on the 31st of July; for tho' the Cavalry only and some Grenadiers and Highlanders which were actually engaged had an opportunity to distinguish themselves eminently, yet the zeal and the spirit shewn by the Infantry in pressing their march in the manner you

[1] *Hardwicke Papers.*

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describe, with the hopes of engaging the Enemy, is very praiseworthy.'[1]

Having crossed the Dymer in pursuit, the Regiment mounted the heights of Wilda and halted there for a couple of days, with other cavalry, on outpost duty. Being reunited to the main body near Warburg on August 3, they remained in camp until the close of the year. They were then ordered into quarters in the rural country of the See of Paderborn, a region practically destitute of adequate food and forage owing to the ravages of war. But in February 1761 and amid terrible conditions of ice and snow, an advance was made into Hesse-Cassel. The enemy steadily falling back before the allied advance, magazines and places of strength were reduced but not retained, as in March a return was made to the old positions, and the 2nd Dragoon Guards were cantoned in villages that had been frightfully devastated. It is on record, indeed, that the conditions prevailing so touched the hearts of all ranks in the British contingent that a fund was opened in aid of these poor people.

The following Order was dated from Paderborn, April 13, 1761: 'As the miserable and distress'd situation of the Poor inhabitants of the Villages upon the Dinel is an object of the greatest Compassion, and as a Collection is making for them by the German troops, Lieut.-General Howard, being persuaded that no people can feel for such distress more than Ourselves, he thought it incumbent upon him to give the Troops notice of it, not doubting but the Commanding Officers of Regiments and all others will most cheerfully contribute to so charitable and humane a purpose. The Collection is desired to be made Regimentally, and given in to Lieut.-Colonel Faucitt at Paderborn, as many officers in each Regiment are absent.'[2]

[1]Standing Orders, 1760–1, British Museum. [2]*Ibid.*

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In July 1761 the Regiment was advanced to Wambelm in Westphalia as a unit of General Conway's command, and on the 15th Lord Granby's force was assailed by the enemy at Kirchdenkern. This action extended into the 16th, and the French were handsomely repulsed, with a loss of 6000 killed, wounded and prisoners, and 9 guns; but the difficult character of the ground rendered it difficult for the Dragoon Guards brigade to act effectively. In August and September they participated in a further forward movement whereby the French were driven from the river Dymer; and in early November, in a heavy snowstorm, a smart little action was fought at Eimbeck, in Hanover. On the night of the 7th, while off-saddled and preparing for encampment at Foerwohle, the Queen's Regiment were surprised by a large force of French. Under great disadvantages they gallantly beat off this onslaught and maintained their position until the morning of the 9th, when, after another successful skirmish, they took position on some heights between Lithörst and Mackensen. At the beginning of December, and still amid snowy conditions, they were quartered in East Friesland. Of our cavalry generally, Lord Granby wrote:[1] 'Finer troops I believe never were, and at the head of them I should be very happy to receive a visit from the Enemy.'

An Order issued at Ohr Camp, October 17, 1761, quaintly reads as follows: 'His Serene Highness intends to make a Gratification to the Troops, and has ordered the Commissariat to deliver to each Battalion and to every Four Squadrons one Barrell of Brandy and six cwt. of Rice or Peas.'[2]

The year 1762 was full of glory for the Regiment. In the spring it was ordered to join main headquarters at Brakel,

[1] Newcastle Papers.
[2] Lord Granby's Order-book, British Museum.

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where an advance in force was being planned against the French army led by Marshals d'Estrees and Prince de Sonbise. The enemy were concentrated around Gröbenstein, and on June 24 the advance against them commenced. The 2nd Queen's accompanied the centre column of the allied army. Having forded the Dymer and negotiated nearly 10 miles of difficult country, they had the good fortune to take the enemy by surprise. The French broke up in such confusion as to abandon their camp to the victorious Allies, whose cavalry made the most of their initial advantage by charging the flying foe sword in hand. So complete was the rout that the Queen's and other formations captured several regiments, especially in the wooded region of Wilhelmsthal. 'Sonbise and D'Estrees were pursued through the gorge of Wilhelmsthal to the very gates of Cassel, which they reached with a loss of 6000 (2700 of which were prisoners), 170 officers (prisoners), 1 standard, 6 colours, 2 cannon and the whole of the baggage and equipages. "Granby did the whole business," declared Ligonier at dinner to the Duke of Newcastle,[1] "than whom no man had ever acted with more courage or more like a Commanding Officer."'[2]

The Regiment was actively employed in following up the discomfited enemy, and, after the fall of Cassel, went into quarters in the neighbourhood of Münster. This capture of Cassel practically terminated the Seven Years' War, though the Treaty of Paris was not signed until February 1763. Both sides were clamouring for peace, and the armies of both belligerents were heartily tired of fighting. From the military and naval standpoint the struggle had conferred much glory on the British arms, as well as accession of territory, notably in North America and India. In Europe,

[1]Prime Minister.

[2]W. E. Manners' *Life of John Manners, Marquis of Granby.*

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the allied army, so ably led by Prince Ferdinand, but frequently hampered by political intrigue and divided counsels at home, had frequently been in the ratio of 60,000 to the enemy's 100,000; Ferdinand himself went down to history as the cleverest commander of British troops in the field between Marlborough's time and Wellington's.

At the period of its re-embarkation for England in February 1763, the regimental strength stood at 15 officers and 325 privates, with 405 horses, 31 officers' servants and 31 women. Proceeding through Dutch territory to Williamstädt, the 2nd Queen's embarked there and, on arrival home, enjoyed a welcome rest in comfortable quarters in Worcestershire. They duly received the thanks of Parliament for their services in the recent war.

On March 26 ensuing, it was enacted that the 'light troop' of the Regiment be dispensed with in future: instead, eight men from each troop received a Light Dragoon equipment, including smaller horses, etc. Being restored to a peace footing, the strength was now reduced to 3 officers, 1 quartermaster, 2 sergeants, 2 corporals, 1 drummer and hautboy-player and 28 men per troop. In 1764, an order of King George III. (who had succeeded to the throne while the Regiment was on service in 1760) decreed that the height of a Queen's Dragoon trooper was not to be less than 5 feet 8 inches nor more than 5 feet 10 inches, and their horses (to be long-tailed in future) not to be under 15 hands nor above 15 hands 2 inches. It further enacted that the jackboot was to be of a lighter pattern, that the aiguillettes on officers' and men's left shoulders be replaced by epaulettes, and that the embroidered 'edging' on officers' coats be dispensed with.

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CHAPTER VII

'Marking Time,' 1764–92 – The War with Revolutionary France, 1793–5

On June 3, 1765, the Regiment, having moved to the London area, was reviewed by the King on Wimbledon Common, in company with the 10th and 11th Dragoons. In October of the following year a detachment was told off to escort the Queen of Denmark to Harwich *en route* for Copenhagen. She was the Princess Caroline Matilda of England, and had lately become the bride of Christian VII. of Denmark. About the same time, trumpeters were substituted for the drummers of the Regiment. Meanwhile, an Order in Council having prohibited the export of wheat and flour on account of the exceptionally poor harvest of 1766, a larger detachment of the Regiment was sent to assist the Customs Officers in enforcing this enactment.

In 1767, when the purchase price of troop-horses for the Regiment was raised from twenty to twenty-two guineas, a somewhat important step was taken in the matter of re-mounting the corps. It was decided that in future, as far as possible, the Regiment should be mounted on bay horses. This was henceforth a regimental custom, and led to the Queen's Dragoon Guards being currently known as the 'Queen's Bays' (although it was not until much later, namely in 1870, that the name was officially recognised). Hereby a particularly individual note was struck, as all other regiments of our heavy cavalry, save the Scots Greys, were mounted on black horses.

The following is a copy of the Warrant[1] for regulating the price of horses:

[1]War Office Records, 26.

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'GEORGE R. Whereas We were pleased by Our Warrant bearing date the 19th day of February, one thousand seven hundred and sixty-six, for regulating the Stock Purse Fund of our Regiments of Dragoon Guards and Dragoons, to direct that no more than twenty guineas should be given for each Recruit Horse; and Whereas it hath been humbly represented unto Us that that sum hath not been found sufficient for providing Horses for re-mounting our said Regiments, Our Will and Pleasure is that for the future a sum not exceeding twenty-two guineas may be given for each Recruit Horse, including all Expences until the delivery of each Horse at any place which may be appointed by the Commanding Officer if the Regiment be quartered in England; but if the Regiment be quartered in Scotland, the seller is then to deliver each Horse for the said price of twenty-two guineas, all expences included, at such place as shall be appointed by the Commanding Officer, provided such place be not farther northward than York, and the price hereby regulated of twenty-two guineas is to be admitted as a charge against the Stock Purse Accounts of our said Regiments of Dragoon Guards and Dragoons respectively. And for so doing, this shall be to all Colonels, Commanding Officers and Agents of Our said Regiments and to all others whom it may concern, a sufficient Warrant. Given at Our Court at St. James's, this 27th day of November 1767, in the eighth year of Our Reign.

'By H.M. Command,

'BARRINGTON.'

The Queen's Bays were next engaged in duties of a kind that are anything but welcome to most soldiers. The proceedings of the notorious John Wilkes, M.P. for Middlesex, having led to riots in the Metropolis, this had the effect of stimulating disorders of various descrip-

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tions. One of these took the form of a demand by seamen for higher wages, culminating in a fatal struggle with the stevedores, coal-heavers, etc., of 'London River': ships were forcibly prevented from either sailing or unloading, and the Lord Mayor had to have military protection at the Mansion House. These disorders rapidly spread to other ports, notably Newcastle-on-Tyne, whither the Bays were dispatched (February–March 1768) to assist the civil authorities. This was by no means an easy task, seeing that at Newcastle the revolted seamen had established something like a reign of terror, actually levying blackmail upon the citizens and perpetrating various outrages. In a short time, however, the Bays' exertions succeeded in bringing about a semblance of order, after which they proceeded to quarters at Edinburgh. Early in 1769 they were sent southward to take part in suppressing fresh disorders in the coalfield district of Lancashire, notably in Warrington and Blackburn. This unpleasant task was carried out in collaboration with other troops, but it implied a sojourn of several months in the affected area.

During the summer of 1771, King George held another review of the Regiment at Wimbledon Common. In the ensuing May (1772) the Bays 'kept the ground' at Whitehall during a Royal review of the Life Guards and Horse Grenadier Guards. After a move to Colchester in the following spring, they left for York on April 28, 1773.

Earl Waldegrave having been transferred to the command of the 2nd Foot Guards, Field-Marshal George, Marquess Townshend, was nominated to the colonelcy of the Bays on July 15, 1773.

The Regiment now resumed its peregrinations – to Scotland in 1774, to Warwickshire in 1775, to Worcestershire in 1776, to 'preventive' duty on the Sussex sea-coast in 1777. In the latter year it was once more inspected by

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the King on Wimbledon Common. Although the Bays were not required to leave their native land in connection with the long struggle between Great Britain and her revolted American colonies, its establishment was increased when, in 1778, France threw in her lot with the transatlantic enemy. This increase amounted to the substantial one of 150 men and horses – 100 in the spring and a further 50 in the autumn, when they were in camp on Salisbury Plain. In the spring of 1779, it was ordained that the troopers of the Regiment who had been equipped as light dragoons should be incorporated, together with men of the 1st Dragoon Guards and 4th and 10th Dragoons, into a new formation entitled the 19th Light Dragoons (afterwards Hussars). The Bays were stationed in Norfolk in 1780, in Yorkshire in 1781, and in Scotland for a twelvemonth in 1782–3.

The Regiment was in Dorsetshire when, in 1783, its strength was reduced by 90 men and the same number of horses, on account of the conclusion of peace with the United States. On the application of the Marquis Townshend as their Commanding Officer, the King accorded permission for the facings of the Bays' uniform coats to be altered from buff to black, in 1784. The King held a review of the Regiment on Ashford Common in May 1786, and during the ensuing two years its quarters were frequently changed.

One of the most interesting figures in the annals of the Queen's Bays, Lieutenant Le Marchant, joined in 1789 from a cornetcy in the 6th Dragoons. Promoted Captain in 1791, he was promoted to a Majority in the 16th Dragoons two years later, and became Lieutenant-Governor and Superintendent of the Royal Military College in 1801. Le Marchant attained the rank of Major-General in 1811. As leader of a heavy cavalry brigade – the 3rd Dragoons, 4th Dragoons and 5th Dragoon Guards – he fell in the cele-

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brated charge at Salamanca in 1812, immortalised in Napier's *Peninsular War*. After that charge, the three regiments in question mustered only three squadrons.

Four years elapsed before the Regiment was to go on active service again. They were in Scotland in 1789, at Manchester in 1790, at Taunton and Exeter in 1791, and at Dorchester in 1792.

The year 1792 may be regarded as epoch-making in the annals of our Army inasmuch as it saw the beginning of the new system of quartering troops in barracks. The old system of quartering them in ale-houses had, as Fortescue says, 'always been deficient, and at last become ridiculous.' It may be well at this point to borrow somewhat freely from the pages in which Fortescue deals with this all-important innovation:

'There were indeed barracks in forty-three different garrisons and fortresses,' he writes, 'with nominal accommodation for twenty-one thousand infantry and artillery; but even if the space had sufficed for twice the number, the troops could not, owing to the demand for their services as police, have been distributed into so few centres. Moreover, the need for small bodies of soldiers in many towns had been increased by the rapid growth of manufacturing industries and by the activity of revolutionary agitators among the artisans. In fact it may be said outright that it was the want of an efficient constabulary that drove Pitt to cover the country with new barracks.'

It was in June 1792 that Pitt summoned Colonel Oliver Delancey, then a Deputy-adjutant-general at headquarters, and asked him to undertake the duty of constructing buildings to house the troops, with the title of Barrack-master-general. Delancey made the most extravagant bargains for both land and buildings, and proved to be a

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rogue, but he got his work done after a fashion. Fortescue continues:

'Over two hundred barracks were ultimately built for one hundred and forty-six thousand infantry and seventeen thousand cavalry; and it is significant that of forty-eight constructed for the cavalry, two only were calculated to contain as many as six troops. In fact they were not military barracks but police-stations for the maintenance of internal order; and from this cause they were far less beneficial than they should have been to the Army. Their original cost was extravagantly wasteful and after a century they are almost worse than valueless; but for this last Pitt cannot be blamed, since in his time a true constabulary was still undreamed of. However, the fact remains that in a few short years the British Army was imperceptibly transferred from quarters in ale-houses to quarters in barracks.'

The 'nineties of the eighteenth century were productive of other important changes in the lot of the Army in general and of the cavalry in particular, and we shall do well to listen to what Sir John Fortescue has to say upon the whole subject:

'Speaking generally,' he goes on, 'the condition of the Cavalry at the opening of the war [with France] seems to have been bad, partly owing to the extreme dispersion of regiments and the underpayment of subalterns, which were causes beyond its control, partly from general idleness and neglect. The Duke of York therefore took the mounted troops early in hand; and having first circulated Dundas's book of drill to commanding officers and enjoined its use, for all regiments, he, in March 1796, appointed a board of General Officers to enquire as to the clothing, saddlery and equipment of the men. On the 18th of May these Generals produced their report. As to clothing, they recommended the abolition of the old long coat in favour of one with short

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skirts, the substitution for epaulettes of wings strong enough to turn a sword cut, breeches of plush with woollen lining instead of leather, and boots well hollowed at the back to be the more easily drawn on and off. In the matter of saddlery they produced a new pattern of saddle, and recommended the abolition of housings, the showy and ponderous drapery which served for an ornament to the horse and for a coverlet to the man. The arms and equipment they left unaltered, desiring only that the bayonet should be issued to light as well as to heavy dragoons; which suggestion was rejected. As to horses, they pointed out that the breed of black horses formerly ridden by all heavy cavalry was either extinct or completely transformed, the animals in the market being suitable for draught only and unfit to carry a soldier. But at the same time they reported that a new type of horse, bred chiefly for gentlemen's carriages, had been introduced, which was well adapted to take the place of the blacks for work in the ranks. Finally, they urged that a veterinary surgeon, a saddler and an armourer should be attached to every regiment of Cavalry in the service.'

Practically the whole of these recommendations were adopted, and they seem to have had good results:

'The price of chargers had risen, as was natural, considering the increase of Regular, Fencible, and Yeomanry Cavalry; and the fact had apparently been made by some officers an excuse for not providing themselves with an animal of any kind. To remedy this an order was issued, shortly before the signing of the report above named, that if any officer neglected to buy himself a charger, his Colonel should buy one for him at a cost not exceeding fifty pounds, and stop the amount from his pay. But at the same time permission was granted for officers to ride nag-tailed horses, not under fifteen hands in height, from which it is to be

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inferred that the price of black chargers with tails undocked had become prohibitive. A month later the Third, Fifth, and Sixth Dragoon Guards, and the Fourth and Sixth Dragoons were named in Orders as allowed to ride brown, bay, or chestnut horses; and this was a greater reform than at first sight appears, for display had been so highly valued in the Cavalry that any change which might depreciate it was welcome.'

In April 1796 an Order was made for appointing a veterinary surgeon to each regiment:

'The pay assigned to them was ninety-five pounds a year; and since apparently the supply of veterinary surgeons was unequal to the demand, it was arranged that regiments which were unable to obtain one should receive one-half of that sum towards the support of a student at the Veterinary College. It should seem that the intention had been for commanding officers to send some of their farriers (to whom hitherto the medical charge of troop-horses had been entrusted) to receive instruction at the College; but this scheme proved to be impracticable. In September 1796, therefore, it was laid down that Veterinary Surgeons should receive the King's commission; their pay was raised to seven shillings a day; and a Principal Veterinary Surgeon to the Army was appointed, with a salary of ten shillings a day. Thus the new department was finally established, and with trained horse-doctors, saddlers, armourers, and armour-sergeants, which last were added in 1802, the efficiency of the Cavalry bade fair to show substantial improvement.'

The training of the mounted troops remained very imperfect, despite these and other changes. Nothing was officially required of the Dragoons, light or heavy, 'beyond excellence in performing showy evolutions.' The more difficult duties of scouting, reconnaissance and dismounted

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work were entirely neglected. Sir John Fortescue concludes his summary of the position thus:

'A certain General Money, who had entered the French service as volunteer in 1792 and had held high command in the field until the entry of England into the war compelled him to resign it, protested strongly in published pamphlets against this false and mistaken system. He pointed out that in England, the most strongly enclosed country in the world, there were forty thousand Cavalry, of which not a single troop was properly armed or trained for dismounted duty; and it is a positive fact that only twelve carbines were issued to each troop of Fencibles. "Is there," asked Money, "between London and Ipswich any ground on which three squadrons of horse can form without being in reach of musketeers from the hedgerows in their front and flank? Of what use then, in God's name, is cavalry when they cannot form to charge?" He quoted the success and efficiency of the French mounted chasseurs in Italy and in other campaigns, and pleaded with great eloquence and force for the introduction of similar corps in England; but he was not sanguine of success. "Till this new system of horse-chasseurs be adopted by Austria and Prussia, whom we copy in most things, and have copied for a century past, nothing will be done." Such was his prediction, and it was perfectly correct. Although the corps of Simcoe and Tarleton had furnished perfect models of light horse – as much at home in the saddle as heavy dragoons, as much at home on foot as riflemen – not the slightest effort was made to imitate them. Yet the very difficult and trying campaign against the Maroons had shown how easily a good regiment of light dragoons could be converted on occasion into the best of light infantry. In fact the omission to form and to instruct corps of dismountable dragoons can only be regarded as a grave reproach upon the officers who were

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responsible for the efficiency of the British Cavalry; and it must be ascribed, in Money's pungent phrase, chiefly to mere "jack-boot prejudice."

'At the same time it must be said, in defence of the Board of Generals who reported on the Cavalry, that they refrained from offering recommendations respecting the Light Dragoons, owing to the expense lately thrown upon the Colonels by the alteration of the uniform in 1784. It should seem, therefore, that reform was in some measure checked by the original sin of the clothing system; but even so the delinquencies of regimental officers are not wholly excused, for they did not prepare their men well even for work in the saddle. The swords, it is true, were of an abominable pattern, long and straight for the heavy dragoons, shorter and much curved for their lighter brothers, but in neither case possessing any guard except a single bar; and for this they were not responsible. But it was greatly to their discredit that their regiments, though taught to charge, were never taught to rally. In short, apart from the addition of the few expert officers already named, and the introduction of uniformity in drill, the attempt to improve the Cavalry appears to have ended in the substitution of grey for blue in the uniform of Light Dragoons in India, and the dressing of the hair of all ranks in a queue measuring ten inches in length below the collar. Such trivialities have too often been preferred to solid and well-considered reform.'

In the spring of 1792, war had been declared by revolutionary France against Austria and Prussia, which were already preparing to intervene for the re-establishment of the old Monarchy. England at first held aloof from the coalition. The first campaign of the Allies ended in failure, and in the late months of 1792 the French army of

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Dumouriez invading the Austrian Netherlands (the Belgium of to-day), by the end of the year was close up to Brussels. It was a British interest that Antwerp should not fall into French hands, and the Dutch were alarmed by the French advance, and were asking for help. Early in 1793 recruiting became active in England, where the Army had been allowed, during the peace, to dwindle to greatly reduced numbers. On February 1, 1793, the Revolutionary Government in Paris, realising that English intervention was more than likely, declared war against England and Holland.

Parliament met on the 11th, and voted the addition of 25,000 men to the Army. New recruits allotted to the Bays increased the strength of the Regiment by three additional troops. The Duke of York was sent to Ostend and soon after reinforced with a Brigade of Line battalions largely made up of raw recruits. His orders were, at first, to stand on the defensive and act only in the event of a French menace to Holland. It was not till the spring that he was directed to act with the Austro-Prussian army under the Duke of Coburg. The Duke of York, though in later years he proved himself a good administrator as Commander-in-Chief at home, did not shine as a commander in the field. It must not be forgotten, however, that he was in command of a mixed force largely made up of troops that were ill prepared for war. He was reinforced, before he engaged in active operations, by Dutch levies, Hessian mercenaries and some good Hanoverian troops; but he was then, against the judgment of his best officers, compelled by the Home Government to engage in a hopeless enterprise. All the Allies were counting on a short successful war, and bargaining for a share in the spoils of France. England was to have Dunkirk, and the Duke of York was directed to attempt its capture at the earliest opportunity.

When it was at last decided that his force should act

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with the Allies in an attempt to drive the French out of the Netherlands, the Duke of York asked for reinforcements from home to increase the strength of his British contingent. The Government had been dispatching battalions to the Mediterranean and the West Indies, and supplying infantry to act as Marines on board the fleet. Nineteen battalions were serving in India, and a large force was kept in Ireland. Only four infantry regiments were left at home, and instead of sending any infantry to reinforce the Duke, it was resolved to send eleven regiments of cavalry to the Netherlands as a stop-gap. The first of these crossed the Channel in March. The Bays embarked at Blackwall on the Thames in May, and landed at Ostend. They were only two squadrons. All the cavalry units were under strength, most of them mustering only about 200 sabres. They were so little ready for active service, that it is related that when they reached the front, foreign officers had to be employed to show them how to put out an outpost line or conduct a reconnaissance.

The Allies had been unfortunate in the year before. The French, under Dumouriez, had beaten them in a pitched battle at Jemappes (near Mons) and captured Brussels. When the winter came, the French were besieging Maastricht, and preparing to invade Holland next year. Its conquest would be a serious matter for England, for it would give the enemy the Dutch fleet and its naval bases. But the outlook for the campaign of 1793 was encouraging, and in the first months of the year success for the allied cause seemed assured. In Paris rival factions were striving for control of the Government, and after the execution of the King, Brittany and La Vendée revolted, and there was disaffection in Normandy and formidable movements against the Republic in the south. During the winter Coburg had collected a large army near Cologne. In March he

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moved westwards, raised the siege of Maastricht, crossed the Meuse at Liège and marched on Brussels. Dumouriez tried to bar his way, but was thoroughly defeated at Neerwinden, abandoned the capital of Flanders to the Austro-Prussians and retired on the group of frontier fortresses on the upper Scheldt.

Dumouriez now felt that the cause of the Revolution was lost. He entered into negotiations with Coburg, hoping to carry over his army to the Allies, march with them into France, and unite with the malcontents in a Royalist restoration. Delegates from Paris were sent to his headquarters to arrest him. He made them prisoners, handed them over to the Austrians, and, failing to induce his troops to stand by him, deserted to Coburg's outposts on April 3, carrying with him only a few of his staff and a handful of German mercenary troopers.

The French Republican cause was in deadly peril, but instead of marching into France, Coburg, acting on the military tradition of the time, decided that he must leave no enemy fortress in his rear, and began the sieges of Condé and Valenciennes. It was now that the British Government ordered York to abandon his mere attitude of observation and defence and actively co-operate with Coburg's Austro-Prussian army and a Dutch force sent from Holland under the Prince of Orange.

When the Bays reached Ostend, York had moved southwards and, reinforced by other allied troops, was on the extreme left of an allied army covering Coburg's siege of Valenciennes against possible attacks from French concentrations about Cambrai, Arras and the fortress of Lille. The Allies were strung out on a long line from Menin on the Lys, by Tournai on the Scheldt, to the neighbourhood of Valenciennes. York's force was chiefly made up of continental troops. The only other British unit besides the

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Bays was the 3rd Dragoon Guards. There were four regiments of Austrian and Prussian cavalry, the rest were German and Austrian infantry, including a Hanoverian contingent, making up an army of about 15,000 in all. The French made no attempt to molest the covering force, and for the Bays it was chiefly a time in which they got some practical experience of outpost work and life in foreign surroundings.

After the surrender of Valenciennes (May 23), Coburg attacked and broke up the French camp of Famars south-west of the captured place, and proceeded to besiege the little fortress of Le Quesnoy. York took part with him in a demonstration towards Cambrai, which went no farther than Bouchain. But the Home Government was now insisting that he should at once endeavour to get possession of Dunkirk, and Coburg reluctantly consented that he should be detached with a mixed force for this operation. The summer was being wasted by the Allies in minor operations. They were still in superior numbers, and France was open to invasion, but they were doing nothing more than besieging two minor fortified towns.

York assembled his army of 35,000 men about Marchiennes, near Douai, on August 13. It was mostly made up of Austrian, Hanoverian and Hessian troops. The Bays rejoined with the 3rd Dragoon Guards, but the British troops mustered only 1100 cavalry and 5200 infantry.

The line of march was along the Belgian frontier, east of Lille and then to Menin, and by the now famous 'Menin Road' to Ypres, then westward towards Dunkirk. At Menin the Duke organised his force in two divisions. One of these, under his personal command, was to conduct the siege; the other, under the Hanoverian General Freytag, was to act as a covering force. Freytag's division, a little over 14,000 strong, was almost entirely made up of Hano-

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verian and other foreign troops, the only British being ten cavalry squadrons, including the Queen's Bays.

Marching by Furnes, York advanced against the east front of Dunkirk. The approach was by a narrow strip of practicable ground from two to three miles wide, with the sandhills of the shore on one side and on the other a nine-mile belt of wide marshes and swampy land impassable for troops except by a narrow causeway near the fortress. On August 24, after driving in the French outposts, the Duke took up a line close to the town. He could not invest it; the marshes covered its south front, and on the west it was open for supplies and reinforcements. Day after day gun-boats slipped out of the port and cannonaded the right of the besiegers' line. A suggestion that a British naval force should be sent to deal with these met with no response. A siege train from England was promised, but the gunners arrived without any heavy guns. Thirty-two naval guns and their ammunition were taken out of a frigate at Nieuport and slowly conveyed by canal to the front, to be mounted in the attacking lines. The only water-supply was from wells, some of them brackish, the rest more or less foul, and sickness began to spread among the besiegers.

Freytag had taken up a covering position beyond the marshes to bar a possible French advance on Furnes, which, if it reached Furnes, would shut up York's force in the pass between the swamps and the sea, and cut off all his supplies. The covering line was some 16 miles long, a weak double cordon of detached posts, from Poperinghe, near Ypres, on the left, to the villages south of Dunkirk and its belt of marsh on the right. Freytag's headquarters were at Hondschoote, near the margin of the marsh land.

The siege had hardly begun, and the guns were being mounted but had not yet opened fire, when the French struck at Freytag's thin line of posts. Carnot, formerly an

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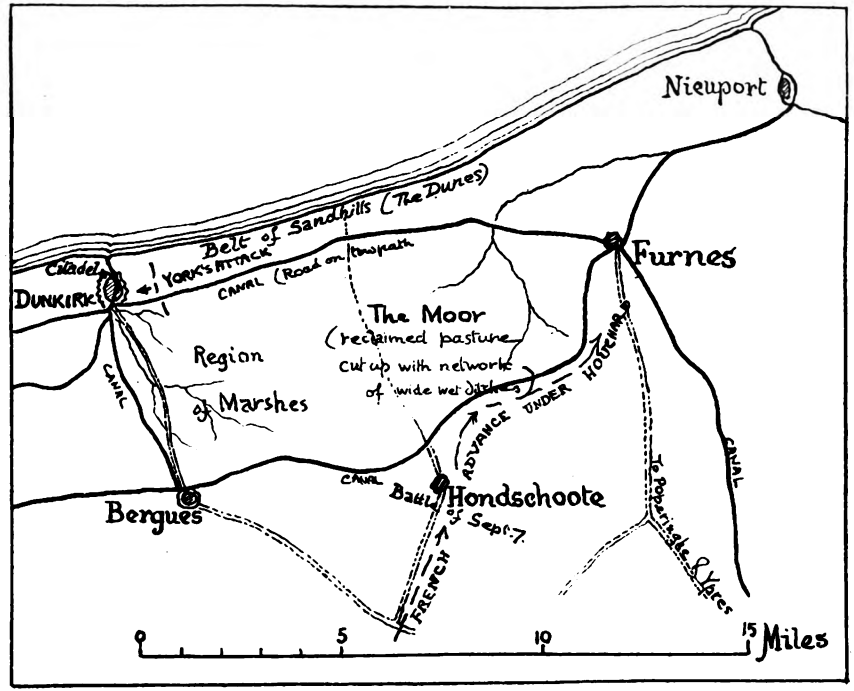

Ch. VII (1)

Siege & Relief of Dunkirk.

-1793-

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engineer officer of the old Royal army of France, a man of undoubted genius for military organisation, was now directing the war policy of the Republic. While the Allies were wasting their opportunities, he had been equipping new armies in France, reinforcing the danger-point on the frontiers, and preparing a series of concentrated attacks in force on the divided armies of the Allies. The first of these was directed against York, whose position invited attack.

Between Lille and Bethune he assembled some 30,000 men, under General Houchard, a veteran of earlier wars. Houchard advanced in five columns at various points on the long front. Two of the column leaders were men who won high fame in later wars – Vandamme and Jourdan. On September 6, after some hard fighting, the line was driven in and Freytag was wounded. Another Hanoverian, General Walmoden, took over the command, and concentrated part of his force about Hondschoote. He held on there next day, but had to retreat on the 8th. It was ground where mounted troops were of little use. A dismounted detachment of the Bays took part in the defence and had one casualty, a trooper killed. It was the only loss of the Regiment in the battle; but many officers and men had been disabled by sickness during the siege, which ended on the evening of the 8th. The Duke of York, abandoning much of his transport and all his naval guns, had begun a hurried retreat to Furnes. 'Our whole enterprise is defeated,' wrote York's Chief-of-the-Staff, 'but I think we shall hold on behind the canal at Nieuport' (the Yser line of 1914–8).

Houchard pushed a detachment towards Nieuport, but decided not to attempt to force the line of the Yser. He probably knew that the canal sluices would be opened and his way barred by floods (the same water power that a century later barred the German advance). He swung round to his right, and marched by Ypres to attack the Dutch

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under Orange, who had been left at Menin to guard York's communications. The French came tramping down the now famous Menin Road, and drove Orange back along the Lys to near Courtrai. Here Houchard found himself faced by the Dutch in front and attacked in flank by an Austrian force, under Beaulieu, sent northwards by Coburg. The French, badly beaten, fell back to Lille. Houchard was deprived of his command and sent to Paris to die under the knife of the guillotine. The Reign of Terror was in full force, and defeated generals were doomed.

The victory of Courtrai enabled York to move to Menin, and for some weeks he was holding a long line in Flanders. He had received some small reinforcements from England, and Coburg had sent him 16,000 Austrians. With the Dutch, under Orange, ready to co-operate, he was holding West Flanders, along the Yser, and the allied front beyond the Lys facing Lille, where Vandamme had a large force under his command, and in October began minor attacks at several points – operations intended to divert Coburg's attention from the next important operation directed by Carnot.

Le Quesnoy had surrendered, and Coburg, still thinking of clearing the border of enemy fortresses, was besieging Maubeuge, with a covering force a few miles to the southward. Reports came to the allied headquarters that a French army was concentrating about Arras. This was, however, supposed to be connected with Vandamme's activities from Lille. But it was a new army under Jourdan, who moved in the first days of October, by a long flank march, south to St. Quentin and westwards to Avesnes, picking up reinforcements as he went – some 40,000 more men in all. In a hard-fought two days' battle on October 15 and 16, he defeated Coburg's main army, covering the siege of Maubeuge on a long front about Wattignies. Carnot was present and shared the direction of the attack. Coburg, who

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had lost heavily, raised the siege, and retreated north-eastward. The weather was breaking, winter quarters were still in fashion, and Jourdan did not follow up his success.

Shortly before the battle, Coburg had suggested that York should bring some of his forces to strengthen the detachments watching Lille on the left of the line. York accordingly moved to near Tournai with some 9000 men, mostly British, and including the Bays amongst the mounted troops. On October 24, he moved out westward to drive in a detachment which Vandamme had pushed out from Lille. The French fell back, and the Bays, who were with the cavalry covering our advance, had a brilliant little engagement with the enemy about 4 miles from the east front of the fortress. It is thus described in Sir J. Murray's dispatch:

'A picquet of six officers and 150 men, which had been posted at the village of Saingain,[1] retreated across the plain towards Lezennes; they had nearly reached the last-mentioned village when a squadron of the Second Dragoon Guards, led by Major Craufurd, Aide-de-camp to His Royal Highness, advancing with rapidity, gained their right flank, and charged them with so much vigour and success, that not a single man escaped; 104 prisoners were taken, and the rest killed upon the spot. The other squadron of the Queen's Dragoon Guards, two squadrons of the Royals, and a division of Austrian Light Dragoons came up in the pursuit.'

The wintry weather was now near at hand, and the campaign of 1793 may be said to have closed in October. After this there were only a few outpost skirmishes, and the troops were mostly in quarters in the villages of the Belgian border. The Bays were sent to spend the winter months in the cavalry barracks at Ghent.

[1]Sainghin-en-Mélantois, 5 miles south-east of Lille.

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In February 1794, the Regiment was ordered to prepare for active service, and moved from Ghent to Tournai. On April 16 it took part in the concentration of a combined allied force, which was reviewed by the German Emperor Francis and his brothers, the Archdukes Charles and Joseph of Austria, on the heights of Le Cateau – ground destined to future fame in the Great War of our own day. Twenty-eight British squadrons in four brigades were present, the Queen's Bays being brigaded with the Scots Greys and the Inniskillings, under General Lawrie.

The review was intended to mark the opening of the campaign of 1794. Operations were to begin next day. At the outset the Emperor Francis was to be the nominal Commander-in-Chief on the northern frontier of France. But he was before long back in Vienna. There was vague talk of a determined push for Paris by way of Cambrai, St. Quentin and the valley of the Oise, and if this had developed from the region of projects into that of realities, the Emperor might have remained longer with the army. But as the hope of any great and rapid success vanished, the Duke of Coburg was once more left to direct the operations, subject always to continual interference from Vienna.

The Allies had over 150,000 men on the Belgian border. York's army had been moved from the coast region to form part of Coburg's main force in the centre, and replaced on the right by some 30,000 Austrians under Clerfait. The left, on the Sambre, was a rather smaller Austrian army under Kaunitz. A considerable proportion of all the allied armies was dispersed in posts and garrisons forming a cordon along the front from the sea to the Belgian Meuse, but a fairly large force had been accumulated in the centre. The operations were delayed by the old tradition that every fortress on the French frontier must be besieged and taken before the great push into France could begin.

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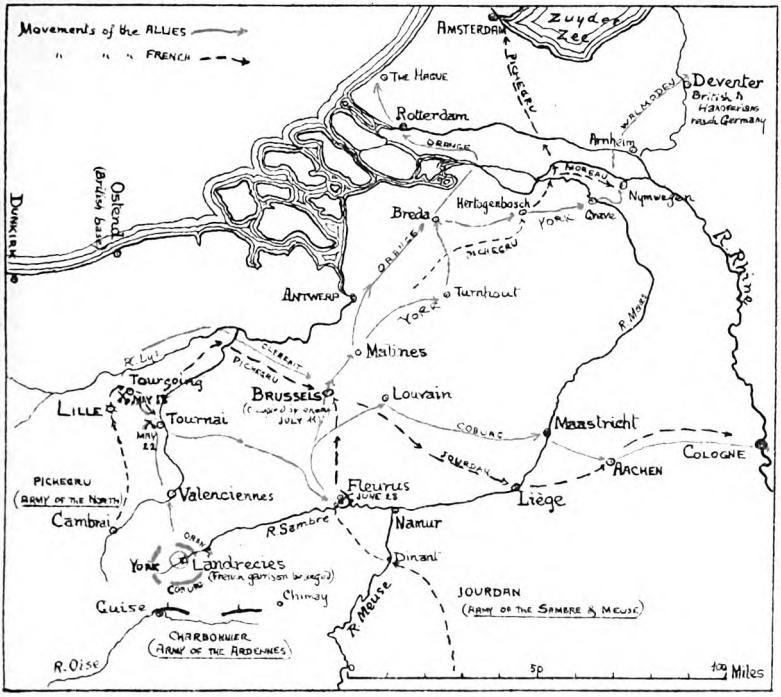

Ch. VII. 2

Campaign of 1794 in the Netherlands

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On April 18, Coburg began his operations by forming the siege of Landrécies. The besieging force was covered and Coburg's main army posted in a huge semicircle, with a front of some 40 miles, facing west, south and east.

On the 18th, during the first operations for the investment of Landrécies, the Bays were in action, Laurie's Cavalry Brigade acting in support of an attack on a French entrenched post at Vaux, in the Selle valley, south of Le Cateau. The Regiment then was, while the siege lasted, attached to York's covering force on the west sector of the line. The French made more than one attempt to raise the siege by attacks on the covering force. These were repulsed, British and Austrian cavalry playing a leading part in these actions by brilliant charges which scattered the badly trained horse of the Republican armies and broke up their infantry.

The Bays were engaged in the victorious battle of April 26. Distinguished in this action was a young officer who, having been commissioned in the Queen's Bays as Cornet in the preceding year, ultimately rose to be Lieut.-General Sir Herbert Taylor, military secretary to the Commander-in-Chief and principal Aide-de-camp to George IV. and to Queen Victoria. This year, 1794, he was promoted Lieutenant in the Regiment, Captain in 1795, Major in 1801 and was made Lieutenant-Colonel of the 9th West India Regiment. He became Lieutenant-General in 1825.

These successes increased the dangerous feeling of contempt for the Republican levies. But these new armies were learning the business of war in the hard school of actual service. The levy *en masse* of the preceding year had given them the advantage of numbers. The Paris Government had been able to place more than 200,000 men on the northern frontier. Among their leaders were soldiers who were soon to win world-wide fame in the wars of the

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Republic and the Empire, and in the north the campaign was directed in its broad lines by the genius of Carnot. While Coburg was engaged in the siege of the insignificant fortress of Landrécies and a huge force was employed in covering it, Carnot's plan of attack was developing. Landrécies surrendered on April 30, but already the French armies were striking, not at Coburg's central force, but at the weak cordons of troops holding the Sambre line on his left and the Flanders flats on his right. The former operation menaced Coburg's communications with Germany, the latter York's communications with Ostend. For the British it was the opening of an offensive by the enemy which was to end in a pitiful disaster almost unparalleled in the history of our Army.

Two days before he captured Landrécies, Coburg had bad news. The French right, under Charbonnier, had attacked Kaunitz in overwhelming force and was driving him across the Sambre. On the other flank another great army, under Pichegru, Souham and Moreau, was over the Belgian border north of Lille and pushing for Courtrai, east of Ypres. Until the 30th nothing could be done to help either Kaunitz or Clerfait, but on May 1 the covering force could break up, and York's army began to move westward towards Tournai to act against the flank of the invaders of Flanders. York reached Tournai on the 3rd. He had about 18,000 men with him – British, Hessians and Hanoverians, with an Austrian cavalry detachment. He occupied next day a position about 3 miles west of the city, with his right on the Scheldt. He was expecting to be largely reinforced by Coburg, and the Allies would then advance to cut off the French advance into Belgium from its base at Lille.

Pichegru, leaving Moreau's Division at Courtrai to deal with Clerfait's Austrians, turned to parry the threat to his

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flank. On May 10 he attacked York, and was badly beaten. The first onset on the British front was held, and then came the decisive move of the day, a cavalry charge against the exposed French flank on the fairly open and level ground before the British right. Orders were given to a force of sixteen British and two Austrian squadrons to push forward to the plain, gain the enemy's flank, turn upon them and charge home. The Bays took part in this brilliant attack, which is thus described by Sir John Fortescue:

'The cavalry obeyed with alacrity, but the ground on the plain, though perfectly level and unenclosed, was much broken by patches of cole-seed, grown in trenches after the manner of celery, which checked the progress of the heavy dragoons. Moreover, the French infantry, for the first time since the Revolution, threw themselves into squares and faced the galloping horsemen with admirable firmness. Nine regiments[1] of cavalry in succession charged up to the bayonets, but with insufficient speed, and fell back baffled. Nevertheless, they followed the French up the plain from south to north, until their left came under the fire of some French heavy batteries. . . . The British cavalry, now reinforced by six more squadrons, hovered about them, watching for their opportunity to attack. At length they fell upon the French horsemen on both flanks and utterly overthrew them, after which they renewed their attempt upon the infantry, but again without success. At last, however, the battalion-guns of the British infantry came up and opened fire, when the French, after receiving a few shots, began to waver. The squadrons again charged, and an officer of the Greys, galloping straight at the largest of the squares, knocked down three men as he rode into it, wheeled his horse round and overthrew six more, and thus

[1]The British regiments engaged were the Blues, 2nd, 3rd and 6th Dragoon Guards, 1st, 2nd and 6th Dragoons, 7th, 11th, 15th and 16th Light Dragoons.

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made a gap for the entry of his men. The sight of one square broken and dispersed demoralised the remainder of the French. Two more squares were ridden down, and for the third time the British sabres had free play among the French infantry. Over 400 prisoners were taken, 13 guns were captured, and it was reckoned that from 1000 to 2000 men were cut down. The loss of the British was 30 men killed, 6 officers and 77 men wounded, 90 horses killed and 140 wounded and missing – the 6th Dragoon Guards being the regiment that suffered most heavily. Not for eighteen years was the British cavalry destined again to ride over French battalions as they rode on this day – and then Stapleton Cotton[1] was fated once more to be present, leading not a squadron of carbineers, but a whole division of horse to the charge of Salamanca. . . .'[2]

The Bays had only slight losses – 2 troopers killed and 2 wounded; 3 horses were killed, 2 wounded and 2 were reported 'missing.'

After some hesitation whether he should move to the help of York on the right or Kaunitz on the left, Coburg decided to join the former, and make a serious attack on the forces that Pichegru was now collecting between Lille and Courtrai. Accompanied by the Emperor he joined York at Tournai on May 15, bringing with him some 62,000 men. On the 16th the Allies moved forward in five columns to attack the French positions on the following day, on a front of some 18 miles.

The battle which began on the 17th and ended in a great French victory on the 18th, is generally known as the battle of Tourcoing, for the heaviest fighting took place in the neighbourhood of Tourcoing and Roubaix, north of Lille,

[1]Afterwards Field-Marshal Lord Combermere, Constable of the Tower after Wellington.

[2]Fortescue, *History of the British Army*, vol. iv. p. 249.

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where the Duke of York's column attacked. These places were then small country towns. They have since grown into large manufacturing centres – satellite cities of Lille, the Manchester of France. The ambitiously planned attack of the Allies ended in confusion and failure. Some of the columns hardly came into action. The brunt of the fighting fell upon York's army. The slackness of the Austrian advance on the right and the almost inexplicable inaction of the Austrians on his left, exposed him to an enveloping attack from the enemy centre, while he was held in front by the French forces covering Lille. It was with difficulty that the British and their comrades under York's command escaped complete envelopment and destruction. York himself owed his escape from capture to the speed of his horse. By the afternoon of the 18th the Allies were in full retreat on Tournai.

On the 22nd a French attack on the advanced positions covering the city was repulsed. Coburg, now anxious about his left, began to withdraw his Austrians towards the Sambre. Pichegru contented himself with watching Tournai, while Moreau dealt with the Austrians in Flanders. On June 1 he besieged Ypres, which surrendered on the 19th.

Towards the end of May, Coburg realised – too late – that anxious as was the situation in Flanders, the real danger was on his left, on the Sambre. The chief effort of the French so far was that of Pichegru, with the army of the north. But at the end of May, Jourdan, with the army of the Meuse, came into action, crossing the river at Dinant, and taking over Charbonnier's detachments to form with his own larger force the army of the Sambre and Meuse. Coburg hastily concentrated every available unit to cover Brussels, menaced by Jourdan's crossing of the Sambre, but on June 26 suffered a crushing defeat at Fleurus, not far from

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the more famous field of Waterloo. As Jourdan pushed on towards Brussels, following up the allied retreat, there was fighting on the ridge of Mont St. Jean and near Waterloo village. On the evening of July 9, Jourdan's vanguard occupied Brussels, where the Army of the Sambre and Meuse was soon joined by the Army of the North under Pichegru.

The campaign had ended in disaster for the Allies. The Austrians were abandoning their possession in the Netherlands, Clerfait with Coburg retreating by Maastricht to the Rhine at Cologne, pursued by Jourdan.

What followed need be only briefly noted. The Austrians were now abandoning the defence of their possessions in the Netherlands, and were soon in full retreat eastward to Maastricht. York, with West Flanders in the enemy's hands and his communication with Ostend cut, retreated by way of Malines with the Prince of Orange, and then fell back to the Dutch frontier in the hope of co-operating with the Dutch in the defence of Holland.

He found the defences in a state of disrepair, and many of the Dutch military leaders disheartened regarding a French conquest as inevitable. A considerable part of the people were unfriendly and, if anything, anxious to see the French arrive. Instead of ending the campaign with the summer and early autumn, Pichegru had planned a winter invasion of Holland, when the ice would make every waterline of river and canal passable at all points even for transport and artillery. York received only useless reinforcements from England, drafts and detachments of untrained recruits under officers as ignorant as their men. At first some efforts were made to delay the French advance, but presently the army was retreating slowly towards German territory, at first in broken weather of alternate frost and thaw that made the roads difficult, then across the ice and

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OFFICER, 1794

From the plate in Cannon's "History of the Regiment"

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snow of north-east Holland in bitter weather, in which men and horses died in large numbers at every bivouac. With men ill-clothed in ragged, shoddy uniforms, and ill-fed, in thinly peopled lands where villages and farms were few and far between, the march became at last not unlike the terrible retreat from Moscow. Discipline broke down. The stragglers went plundering the peasants for food.

York's mixed force of British and Hanoverians had parted company with Orange and the Dutch at Breda, the latter retreating to The Hague. Pichegru, after securing Antwerp, had entered Holland, and at first followed up York's column, the rearguard of which had some minor engagements with the pursuers. At Hertogenbosch Pichegru handed over the pursuit to a detachment under Moreau, and with his main army crossed the frozen Maas, Rhine and Waal into North Holland. He occupied Rotterdam and Amsterdam, and his final success was the surrender to his advanced cavalry of the Dutch fleet, locked in the ice of the Helder at the entrance to the Zuyder Zee.

Moreau abandoned the pursuit at Nymwegen. York then handed over the command to Walmoden, and the remnant of the army moved on to cross the border river, the Yssel, at Deventer and enter Germany.

Of the experiences of the Bays during this retirement through Holland we have no details. They probably fared better than the hapless infantry, for when the army reached the north, York wisely sent on the cavalry in advance, as they could no longer be of much use, and the mounted troops were thus spared some of the final horrors of the winter march.

Until the early months of the new year the troops were billeted in towns and villages along the Ems from Rhein to Emden, with headquarters at Osnabruck. In March 1795 the Government at last decided to bring them back

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to England. It was not till the middle of April that the first troops embarked for the return voyage.

On their return to England in December 1795, the Bays were quartered first at Ipswich and later at Romford in Essex.

Early in the year the following Royal Warrant had been issued to the Marquis Townshend, Colonel of the Bays:

'GEORGE R. These are to authorise you, by beat of drum or otherwise, to raise so many Men in any County or part of our Kingdom of Great Britain as are or shall be wanting to Recruit and fill up the respective Troops of Our Regiment of Dragoon Guards under your Command to the numbers allowed upon the Establishment. And for so doing this Our Order shall be and continue in force for Twelve Months from the 25th day of March.

'Given at Our Court at St. James's this 28th day of Feby. 1795 in the thirty-fifth year of Our Reign.

'By His Majesty's Command,

'W. WINDHAM.'[1]

The Bays were at Southampton and Salisbury in 1797, and at Windsor and Croydon in 1798. In the latter year their muskets and pair of pistols were discarded in favour of carbines and one (smaller) pistol. Principal events in 1799 included another review by the King at Wimbledon, and an increase of the Regiment's strength to ten troops, together with an order for re-mounting it on 'nag-tailed' horses. This augmentation of the establishment was again curtailed to eight troops after the Peace of Amiens in 1802. The Bays had, in the meantime, been quartered in Hertfordshire, and at Peterborough and Wellingborough, Bristol and Bath, successively.

This seems a favourable opportunity for recalling the

[1]War Office Records, 25,

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services of two officers, one of whom became Lieutenant-Colonel of the Regiment in February 1802. Sir James Erskine, Bart., had already held the Lieutenant-Colonelcy of the 15th Light Dragoons, and had been Aide-de-camp to the King. Promoted Major-General in 1808, he commanded a cavalry brigade in Portugal under Wellington, and survived until 1825. So also did Colonel Robert B. Long, who succeeded Erskine as Lieutenant-Colonel of the Bays in 1803. He had already distinguished himself in Flanders in 1793–4 and in the Irish rising of 1798. Quitting the Bays for the 16th Light Dragoons, he fought at Corunna, was Adjutant-General during the ill-starred Walcheren Expedition of 1809, and commanded a brigade at Vittoria.

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CHAPTER VIII

The Walcheren Expedition, 1809 – The Regiment in 'The Forty Years' Peace,' 1815–54

In 1802, during the brief period of peace that followed the Treaty of Amiens, the Queen's Bays were sent to Piershill Barracks, Edinburgh. From 1803 to 1805 the Regiment was in Ireland.

In July 1803, amid the alarm created by Robert Emmet's attempt to seize Dublin Castle, the Bays were marched into the Irish capital, where they were doing garrison duty till the following summer, when six troops of the Regiment were moved to the Curragh Camp and two were sent on detachment duty to Roscommon and Longford.

It was during their stay in Ireland that the establishment of the Regiment was increased by the addition of three officers of Captain's rank to command troops, the old practice having been abolished of the Colonel, Lieutenant-Colonel and Major being also ranked as commanders of troops and thus drawing additional pay and allowances.

In August 1805 the Regiment was brought back to Dublin, and in December it embarked for England, arriving at Liverpool on Christmas Day to be inspected by the Duke of Gloucester (commanding the district) and sent into quarters around Coventry and Birmingham.

Restored to a war establishment of ten troops again in the spring of 1806, in that year the Regiment narrowly escaped being involved in General Whitelocke's abortive expedition to Spanish South America. Four troops were, in fact, dismounted, and embarked at Plymouth in August in H.M.S. *Captain*, *Malta* and *Theseus*. A French squadron being, however, discovered in the offing, the soldiers were promptly

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disembarked, while the men-o'-war went in chase of the enemy. The orders for South America were cancelled and the Bays were sent to Salisbury, where 120 horses were received from the 20th Light Dragoons, who had been dismounted and included in Whitelocke's expedition. In 1807, Major-General Charles Gregan Crawford succeeded to the Colonelcy of the Regiment on the death of the Marquis Townshend. There were successive moves to Chichester and Arundel, to Hastings, Eastbourne and Rye, and thence (December 1808) to Canterbury. An item of interest noted in the Regimental Records is that 'this year the men's hair, which had been worn long, powdered and tied in a queue, was ordered to be cut short.'

It was the ill fortune of the Regiment that during the long war with Napoleon, in which most of our cavalry regiments had some share in Wellington's victories in Portugal, Spain, the South of France and at Waterloo, the only campaign in which the Queen's Bays were engaged was the ill-directed Walcheren Expedition of 1809.

Had it been a success it would have been remembered as the 'Antwerp Expedition,' for its objective was the Belgian port. Antwerp had been a French fortress since 1794. It was the base of a gunboat flotilla on the Scheldt and a nest of privateers. Its dockyard had been extended, and warships were repaired and built there. It was a standing menace to the Channel. As Napoleon said, it was a pistol pointed at the heart of England. Since the summer of 1807 there had been projects of an expedition to the Scheldt to seize Antwerp and destroy its dockyard and shipping.

In the spring of 1809, when Napoleon was involved in a new war with Austria, it was at last decided to make the attempt on Antwerp. Preparations were on so ambitious a scale that it developed into the largest combined naval and

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military expedition that had ever left the English shores. The military branch of the enterprise gradually increased to an army of 40,000. It was realised that only a small mounted contingent would be needed. The Bays, then at Canterbury, were warned early in the spring that they would be detailed for this service. A huge fleet of transports was assembled in the Thames and the Downs, with a fighting fleet of 37 ships of the line, 23 frigates and over 100 sloops and gunboats. Pitt's elder brother, the Earl of Chatham, was to command the army, and Admiral Sir Richard Strachan, a good naval officer, the fleet.

If a smaller force had been used and a vigorous stroke delivered at the earliest possible date, success would have been fairly certain. But after months spent in preparations it was not until July 28 and 29 that the elaborate armada at last sailed from the Downs. On the evening of the 29th the mouth of the Scheldt was white with English sails, and when the fleet anchored for miles along the estuary, it looked like a floating city.

But three weeks before, Napoleon had crushed Austria by the decisive victory of Wagram.

While the expedition was being prepared, Louis Bonaparte, who reigned in Holland as his brother's tributary King, had been in serious alarm. He had written to the Emperor that his kingdom was at the mercy of the great force that was assembling in the Downs. Of the Dutch army one division was in Austria, another in Spain; he had only 9000 men under arms in Holland, mostly raw recruits or aged veterans. All the fortresses were in bad condition for defence. Antwerp had a garrison of only 2000 French troops – men unfit for field service. There was another small garrison in Flushing on the island of Walcheren at the river mouth. Antwerp was at the mercy of even a small expedition. He asked for reinforcements. Napoleon replied that

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the attack on Antwerp had been talked of for years, and the expected English expedition was a mere threat.

But here was the expedition in the Scheldt in overwhelming strength. If Strachan and Chatham had pushed on at once for Antwerp, they could have mastered it in a single day, and set its docks, warehouses, warships on the building-slips and under repair in one huge blaze, and withdrawn in triumph. Mines were not to come into existence for a century. There were only a few gunboats in the river, the fleet could have sailed past the short-range batteries of Flushing. But Chatham decided that he must not advance leaving the riverside fortress in his rear.

He began to land his army among the swamps of Walcheren, and send guns and ammunition ashore for the attack of the land front of Flushing while the fleet cannonaded the river front and threw shot and shells into the town. King Louis made excellent use of the unexpected respite thus granted to him. He called out the National Guard, hurried 7000 Dutch troops to Antwerp, called up French reinforcements from Lille without waiting for the Emperor's permission, set gangs of workmen to repair the defences and erect batteries along the river, and took guns from Antwerp citadel and the warships to arm them, flooding the country in rear of his batteries and on the Antwerp fronts by opening the sluices of the dykes.

On August 16 Flushing at last surrendered. But there were now 30,000 men holding Antwerp and the defences of the river narrows, and on this very day Louis handed over the command to Marshal Bernadotte, who had arrived at Antwerp with news that his whole division was near at hand. But by this time what was described first as 'fever and ague' and later as the 'Walcheren fever' had disabled thousands of the troops that had been landed, and the men were dying like flies. Hopelessly bad sanitation, the

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mosquitoes of the marshes, and the bad water drawn from canals and fouled and shallow wells were cause sufficient to explain the terrible mortality that levied such a toll of life and shattered the health of those who recovered from the fever and were sent back to England. There were now long debates as to whether an attempt on Antwerp should be made. Chatham declared he was ready for it – the judgment of an incompetent commander. Strachan, who knew his business, decided that it would be a dangerous operation to force the passage up the Scheldt now that it was well defended, and the fleet could not act without the army, which was daily becoming less fit for service. It was not till November that the Government at last decided that the enterprise must be abandoned, but 'to compel the enemy to keep a large army in Belgium' it was directed that 15,000 men must remain to hold Flushing and Walcheren. Thousands of lives were lost, and more were to be sacrificed to this folly.[1]

The Bays were fortunate in having been already sent home. At the end of August it had been realised that cavalry were not needed for Walcheren, and on September 4 they landed at Ramsgate, and marched to their former quarters at Canterbury.

The Bays were soon afterwards engaged in the duty of assisting to 'keep order' in the Metropolis after the civil powers had failed to cope with the popular disturbances due to the committal to the Tower of the notorious Member for Westminster, Sir Francis Burdett. This occurred in April 1810. In May 1811 the Bays were in London again, and on June 10 they were reviewed on Wimbledon Common

[1]As a result of the memories of 1809, Walcheren and Flushing had long an evil reputation in England. But the town and the island under modern conditions are now healthy enough for Flushing to rank as a Dutch seaside resort; and every summer Walcheren receives large numbers of holiday-makers, not only from Holland, but also from England, France and Germany.

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by the Prince Regent. It must have been a sufficiently imposing spectacle, as there were some 20,000 troops on the ground, and the other mounted units included the Household Cavalry, 10th, 15th and 18th Hussars, 3rd Dragoons and 12th Light Dragoons. A change was about this time effected in the Bays' headgear and uniform, cocked hats giving place to brass helmets and the coats to shorter ones with less elaborate facings and lacing.

It will readily be believed that the officers and men of the Regiment found no particular enjoyment in the disagreeable duties, during a portion of 1812, of assisting to suppress the 'Luddite' industrial riots in Lancashire, Yorkshire and the Midlands. These disturbances, taking the form of destruction of machinery and other property, were principally traceable to the distressed conditions engendered by almost perpetual continental warfare, accompanied by industrial and agrarian agitation.

In December 1813 the Regiment was warned to prepare for embarkation to reinforce Wellington, who had now thoroughly broken the French power in Spain, reached the Pyrenees and was about to carry the war into France. But at the last moment, as the result of the satisfactory reports of progress of the British arms, the order was countermanded. In the following April, on the departure of Louis XVIII. from England to restore the Bourbon monarchy to France, the Bays furnished a couple of squadrons to attend his embarkation at Dover. A few weeks later (June 20, 1814), they took part in a grand review in Hyde Park in the presence of the Prince Regent and of the allied Sovereigns, including the Tsar of Russia and King of Prussia, then visiting England after the first downfall of Napoleon.

Scotland was the Queen's Bays' next destination. On the renewed outbreak of war after Napoleon's return from

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Elba, the regimental strength was raised to ten troops, but the Bays were not sent abroad till after Waterloo had been won, when six troops were ordered to France to reinforce the British Army of Occupation. Embarking at Ramsgate and Dover on June 27, 1815, they were landed at Ostend early in August, and marched to the environs of Paris. Here they passed in review, together with the Royal Horse Guards, 1st and 2nd Life Guards, 1st and 3rd Dragoon Guards, 3rd Dragoons, and Royal Horse Artillery, before the Tsar Alexander, who was pleased to compliment them on their smart appearance. The Bays were destined to remain in French territory until far into 1818, at first at St. Omer and afterwards at Calais. On October 22, 1816, they took part in a 'sham fight'[1] at St. Germain in the Duke of Wellington's presence, and on June 29, 1818, they were reviewed on Calais sands by the Duke of Kent. During the greater part of their sojourn in France they were under the immediate orders of Lord E. Somerset, who complimented them in the following brigade-order issued on November 4, 1818, a day or two before their final departure from Calais to Dover.

'Major General Lord Edward Somerset, in taking leave of the two Regiments, 2nd Dragoon Guards and 3rd Dragoons, which he has had the honour to command for nearly three years, begs to congratulate them on the approbation expressed at their conduct by the Lieutenant General commanding the cavalry, as well as by the distinguished officers who have lately seen them in the field. The Major General has great pleasure in assuring them of the sense he entertains of their good conduct. He requests the officers

[1]This was what would now be known as a 'field day.' The term 'sham fight' was a not inapt description in those days, for the opposing detachments carried out movements settled in advance, and it was a theatrical display, with no discretion left to either of the opposing commanders.

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OFFICERS, 1823

XI Dress. Worn on all regimental duties and parades

Undress

Court Dress

From the aquatint by Gledah, after Heath, now in possession of Major P. Shaw

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commanding the two Regiments and troop of Horse Artillery, and the officers in general, will receive his thanks for the zeal they have manifested in the discharge of their duties, and he offers them his best wishes for their future happiness and prosperity.'

The Regiment inaugurated its somewhat monotonous routine duties of the 'forty years' peace' with a reduced establishment of 409 non-commissioned ranks and 273 troop horses. After brief periods in barracks in the Windsor area and at Bristol, the men were sent to Ireland at the close of 1818. They remained in various parts of the Green Isle throughout 1819–20, and the esteem with which they were officially regarded may be gathered from the two following Orders, issued from Cahir and from Dublin respectively:

'*South-East District Order*

'CAHIR, *5th May* 1819.

'Major General Doyle is much pleased with the excellent appearance the Queen's Bays made this day at their half-yearly inspection. The horses are not only of a superior description but the manner in which they have been trained, the condition they are in, the uniform seat of the soldier, and the riding in general, marked the attention which must have been paid by the Riding Master, Lieut. Dyer, and every individual concerned. The manœuvres in the field, the sword exercises, the marching and several charges were performed with celerity and precision. The care of the sick, the state of the Hospital and of the Barracks, the good behaviour of the men since their arrival in the district, and the whole interior economy of the Regiment cannot be surpassed and reflect credit on Lieut.-Colonel Kearney, who appears to have been ably supported by his command.'

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'*Garrison Orders*

'DUBLIN, 22*nd September* 1820.

'Major-General Sir C. Grant cannot allow the 2nd Dragoon Guards to return to Newbridge Barracks without expressing to Colonel Kearney, to the officers, and to the men, his entire approbation of this excellent Corps. The appearance of the Regiment in the Field, the pointed attention of all classes to their respective duties, and the consequent precision of movement, have merited and obtained his applause.

'The manner in which the Regiment is mounted reflects very great credit on Colonel Kearney, and strongly evinces the attention which he has paid to this most essential part of the duty of a Commanding Officer.'

The Bays were again complimented on their part in a review of the Dublin Garrison by Earl Talbot, then Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, on April 23, 1821, the other troops present being the 12th Lancers, 3rd Light Dragoons, Royal Artillery, 23rd, 33rd, 43rd and 78th Regiments of the line. They embarked for England on May 29. While in Ireland they lost their popular Colonel, Lieut.-General Sir C. G. Crauford, who passed away in March 1821, and was succeeded by General William Loftus.

Further reduced to the peace establishment of six troops (335 N.C.O.'s and men) and 253 troop horses, the Regiment was quartered in Yorkshire, Cumberland and the Midland Counties in 1822–4. Marching south in the spring of the latter year, it formed part of a Cavalry Division (Royal Horse Guards, 1st and 2nd Life Guards, 1st Dragoon Guards, 7th Hussars, 12th Lancers, Scots Greys, Royal Horse Artillery), reviewed on Hounslow Heath by the Duke of York, Commanding-in-Chief, with whom were the Dukes of Cambridge and Sussex. 'The condition of these

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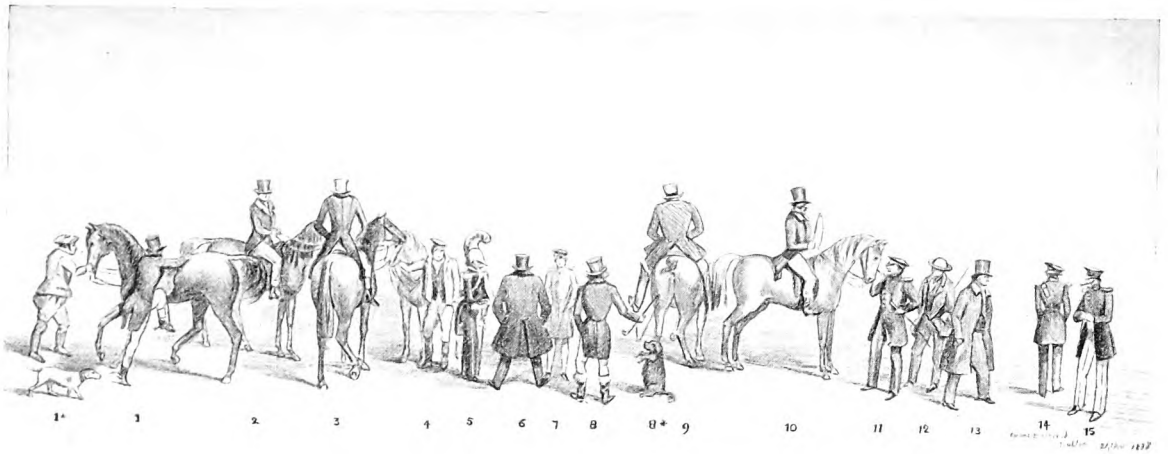

THE OFFICERS. ROYAL BARRACKS, DUBLIN, 1838

1. Lt. E. Robertson. 1* His dog, 'Rose'
2. Cornet R. Dallas
3. Capt. W. Campbell
4. Captain of the Guard Horse
5. Captain Lepoer French
6. Surgeon Dawn
7. Cornet J. Acland
8. Sir H. St. John Mildmay. 8*. His dog
9. Sir H. C. Paulett
10. Capt. R. J. Dunn
11. W. Wernham, riding-master
12. Lt. W. Perrse
13. W. Woodman, vet. surgeon
14. Lt. H. Briscoe
15. F. Haviland, adjutant

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Regiments,' states the Regimental Records of the Bays with pardonable pride, 'their marshal appearance, the precision with which their several movements were executed, their uniform order and steadiness, combined with velocity in the several attacks, evinced a high state of discipline, and exhibited a splendid military spectacle which excited universal admiration and received the unqualified approbation of the Commander-in-Chief.'

After spending the great part of 1826 at Manchester, the Queen's Bays were sent back to Ireland. Here they remained, being quartered principally around Limerick, Clonmel and Cahir, and did not return to England until the spring of 1830. They lost another Colonel by death on July 20, 1831, when General Loftus was succeeded by Lieut.-General Sir James Hay, K.C.B., an old officer of the Bays and much beloved by all ranks.

The year 1832 was passed in Scotland. In September 1833 an inspection took place at Bulwell Forest by H.R.H. the Duke of Sussex. A return to Ireland took place in May 1835 and was continued until the end of 1839. During the 'forties, the Midlands and Ireland were again principally the scene of the Bays' activities.[1] Their *fourth* visit to the Emerald Isle since the Napoleonic wars lasted from June 1843 until May 1848. This Irish itinerary included Ballincollig, Longford Barracks, Dublin and Newbridge. The next transfer was to Edinburgh, where Piershill

[1]A serious disturbance at Burslem in August 1842, seems to have given the Regiment an opportunity for distinguishing itself. A presentation was made to Major Le Poer Trench, with the following inscription on it: 'Presented to Major Le Poer Trench, of H.M. 2nd Dragoon Guards, as a small but sincere tribute expressive of the high esteem and respect which the Inhabitants of the town of Burslem, in Staffordshire, entertain for the gallant, firm, and temperate conduct, displayed by him, and the men under his Command, on the eventful morning of the 16th August 1842, when he successfully vindicated Social Order, Restored the supremacy of the Law, and effectually defeated the evil designs of a revolutionary mob.'

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Barracks were occupied from June 1848 until the close of April 1850. On December 15 of that year died General Sir William Lumley, formerly the Bays' popular Commanding Officer, universally regretted.

The 'forty years peace' was drawing to a close, although the Regiment was not required for active service in the Crimean War. York and Manchester were their next stations, and then in 1852 a fifth visit to Ireland began, and was prolonged into 1857. In 1856 (on March 1 to be exact) a slight alteration was effected in the dress of the Regiment, whose facings were changed from black to buff, which had been their original colour.

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CHAPTER IX

The Indian Mutiny, 1857–9

The revolt of the native troops in the East India Company's army in Bengal began with the mutiny of the Sepoys at the military station of Meerut, on Sunday, May 10, 1857. Next day the mutineers seized Delhi, and the rising spread rapidly. Communications with India were then so slow that the terrible news did not reach England till July 11. The Queen's Bays were in barracks in Dublin. On that day they received a telegram informing them that they were among the reinforcements for India, and were to cross over to England at once.

They landed at Liverpool and marched to their depot at Canterbury. One troop was to be left there, the other nine prepared for active service.

Lieut.-Colonel Hylton Brisco was in command, and the strength of the Regiment when it left Canterbury, after handing over its horses to the depot, was 28 officers, 47 sergeants and 635 other ranks. On July 25 the Bays embarked on the transports *Blenheim* and *Monarch*.

The voyage by the old Cape route took four months, and it was not till November 25 and 27 that the Bays disembarked at Calcutta.[1] Here they were re-mounted and equipped for Indian service. In December they were conveyed by train to what was then the rail-head at Raneegunge,

[1]Soon after the Bays sailed from England, the dispatch of reinforcements was accelerated by the friendly action of the Emperor Napoleon III., who agreed to British troops for the East passing through France. They were thus enabled to use what was then known as the 'Overland route to India,' travelling across France to Marseilles, where they embarked for Alexandria. They then went by Cairo and the now long disused 'Desert railway' to Suez, where transports from the East were collected to convey them to India.

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about 80 miles from Calcutta, and set out on a march of some 400 miles to Allahabad, where they arrived on January 14, 1858.

Vivid impressions of some of the incidents of that march are to be had from three or four of a long series of letters written by Captain W. H. Seymour – the future Colonel of the Regiment – to his mother during December and January. We may, perhaps, transcribe the first of these letters in full. It gives us the 'atmosphere' of the life the Regiment was just then living:

'CAMP, RANEEGUNGE, BENGAL,
December 5, 1857.

'MY DEAREST MOTHER, – Until now, from the time that we disembarked, we have been leading such a worrying, disagreeable, busy life that this is the first time that I have been able to sit down and collect my ideas, and prepare myself for a chat with you. First of all, I must tell you that I am in the very best of health, thank God! We have all been more or less indisposed since coming off board ship, and this is I believe invariably the case after a long voyage, and I, along with the rest, was unwell (though not on the sick list) for four or five days, but by steady living and a little physicking from the Doctor, I was soon mended up, and now never felt better in my life.

'On the 25th ultimo we moved up to our anchorage. Calcutta is certainly a city of palaces, if fine houses make it so, but it is a dirty, hot place. On the next day we disembarked at daylight, and were put up during our stay at a large school, forming temporary barracks, called the "Martiniere," the officers living at Wilson's hotel. Our troubles now commenced, for we received orders on our arrival, to the effect, that we were to be *mounted* immediately, on horses that had been procured for us, and sent

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up the country to Sir Colin Campbell with the *utmost speed*; and as we knew that we should leave Calcutta with our horses in a day or two afterwards, we had, as you may readily suppose, to hasten our preparations, being ordered to leave our heavy baggage in store with our agents; and, together with the thousand and one things we had to think of, had to rummage about in our boxes, and get out what things in the way of clothes and war kit we now have.

'On the 28th, received orders to proceed on the following day with my squadron and 160 horses to Raneegunge. Paraded on the morning of the 29th before daylight, took over our horses, crossed the Hooghly by ferry, and reached this by railroad, 130 miles from Calcutta, the following morning, marching into camp and picketting our nags. Two other squadron came up the two following days, and we have now here of the regiment some 500 men and 400 horses. The remainder of the regiment we expect every day, but with how many more horses we shall march off, I can hardly say, they being exceedingly difficult to get, notwithstanding that government are paying 1000 and 1500 rupees for our troupers. We are so far *capitally* mounted, and are very anxious to continue our march up the country, but we shall not get away from this for another week, notwithstanding that we are using almost superhuman efforts to get our saddlery, &c., fitted and ready. Among our horses we have 120 from the Governor General's bodyguard, and I believe that we are to get the whole of the remainder.

'The route for our march has arrived. By it, it seems that we are to march the usual distance a day, as far as Benares, and then proceed by forced marches to Allahabad, and so on. We are living here in a camp *in tents*, and though this is the cold season, and old Indians say the weather is delightful, the thermometer in my tent (3 p.m.) is over 80° Fah.'

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On December 24 they are at Gorindpoor. Seymour writes:

'. . . Here we are, *en route* for Allahabad, where we are to be formed into a brigade, along with the 7th Hussars and two troops of Horse Artillery, under our Colonel, Brigadier Campbell. Such at least is the report. We get to Allahabad about the 15th of next month, and very hard marching we shall have had, as the last ten days are *forced* marches. This, on a *new* regiment, is trying. We are marching without our heavy baggage, yet we have no less than 2000 *paid* camp followers! We march at 4 a.m., always in the dark for over two hours, and this adds much to the ordinary confusion of a march. We sleep in tents, but our tents are never up with the regiment for some time after we reach our new camping ground, being carried on bad elephants and country hackeries. It is all very rough I assure you. However, thank God! I am *very* well and happy: in fact, I like the country and the life, rough and roving as it is. The snakes about where we are, are very numerous, and we are just entering the tiger district. We killed a *cobra* in our cooking pots a few days since. The worst part of my tale, however, is to come – cholera, a disease from which we have hitherto been free, has made its appearance, and we lost our first man, since leaving England, yesterday, and have a serjeant now dying. I believe that every new regiment has had it but ourselves, so we have been hitherto fortunate. The poor fellow's case yesterday was the most rapid case of cholera I have as yet seen: he was taken with it on the march in the morning, and died at sunset, a fine, strong, hale old dragoon. Our officers had been greatly plagued with their native servants, as owing to the times, one is obliged to pay them in advance. Nearly all those engaged in Calcutta have *bolted*! I had heard that this

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would be the case, and I, fortunately, did not engage one there. *None* of mine have left me, and I am very well contented with those I have, and we get on famously, though only one speaks (a little) English. My establishment is complete, and consists of a bearer, a kitmutgar, a doby, a clashy, 4 syces, 4 grass cutters. These terms are different from your Bombay ones, I suspect. The first named is the head servant and valet; the second, cook and butler; the third, the washerman; the fourth, the tent-pitcher; the last, grooms and grass cutters. My campaigning stud is also complete – two chargers and two baggage ponies. My tent is a government one, and in it I "hang out" with one of my subalterns. You have now a pretty accurate idea of my domestic arrangements. Regimental mess we have none, but we mess by troupes, *i.e.* captains with their subalterns, and *very comfortably* too – though off our rations, and without tables and chairs! I have had to go to Calcutta again, to get some troupe stores, and some things out of my heavy baggage, and having a vivid recollection of the baggage left in the *Constantinople* having been broken open, I took out my watch, your miniature, and my gold regimental belts, and gave them to —— to take care of, the rest must take its chance. The more we get up country, the colder it becomes, and although the mid-day is *very hot*, yet marching before daylight is *very cold* work, shiveringly so!'

On January 11 they are encamped at a point 20 miles beyond Benares. The narrative continues:

'. . . Since I last wrote to you, we have been continuing our march daily, unparalleled I believe with a *young* cavalry regiment in India: *no* halt having been named in our route, and we are finishing up with *forced* marches to Allahabad. I, thank God! have kept my health and spirits perfectly, but we have had much sickness – cholera, fever and dysentery

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among our men, and owing to the unsafeness and usual inconvenience of this country, have lost more men than we otherwise should have done, for we are obliged to carry the sick daily with us – poor fellows! Out of 276 dhooley bearers that accompanied us from Raneegunge, *not one* is now with us, nor have we had one for days, all having bolted! Our native servants are behaving better than we had reason to expect, though we are *quite at their mercy*, and we are obliged to put up with their roguery, idleness and drunkenness. *Everything* of that sort and kind is scarce, and four times the price it ought to be. We have got, we fear, our *last* supplies of comfort in Benares, nothing being procurable further up country. Our commissariat is wretched, and there is no help for it. Our *carriage* is wretched in the extreme, breaking down daily; and owing to our baggage, in consequence, not being *up*, one has to shake down in one's cloak on mother earth. The elephants with our tents and our camp followers are foot-sore with the forced marches, and the latter generally come just before we march, if at all! Notwithstanding all this, I am as *bonny* as possible – really happy – and I am certain from this, and my former campaign, that I am quite cut out for a rough life.

'Our march (I mean the country) has been quite uninteresting, not even the sight of a tiger to vary the scene, but after marching *forty miles* (in a day!) we reached Benares the day before yesterday. So busy is our life, even when in camp, that I could only spare an hour and a half to see the place, and as it is of enormous extent, you may well guess that I did not see much. On the sacred Ganges, at the sacred city of the Hindoos, a mortar battery is erected, ready to destroy at a moment's notice the most sacred edifice in India – the mosque of ——, the highest minaret of which I managed to ascend, and from it got a most magnificent view, and I only wish somebody had been with me,

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BARRACK ROOM, 1850

From painting, artist unknown, now in possession of Lt.-Col. C. A. Heydeman

OFFICERS' QUARTERS, 1850

From painting, artist unknown, now in possession of Lt.-Col. C. A. Heydeman

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for I happened to be alone. My native servants chose, without leave, to go on the spree last night into Benares, and on marching off this morning, had not returned, and if it had not happened that I could procure the momentary services of a sharp dragoon, my *small* amount of baggage would have been left to its fate. Now they are coming up. This is one of the many annoyances one has to put up with.

'We reach Allahabad on Thursday next, and, I hear, shall barely have breathing time there before we shall flesh our swords. Our men will go at the scoundrels with a will, I know, for they are as keen as they can be – quite exasperated at the tales we hear. All the police stations, and most of the European bungalows that we have passed for some days, are in ruins, and frightful must have been the havoc. Scarcely fifty *perfect* yards of the electric telegraph, but it has all been mended now.

'Our horses are turning out very well, in fact, we are capitally mounted, but it is a nuisance not knowing whether they will stand fire or not – the "sine qua non" of a trooper – as they never carried a dragoon before. I hear the Carabineer troopers have got the regiment into several scrapes on this account, having turned tail with their riders. I trust this may not happen to the "Bays," who have not been on active service for forty years. I tell you nothing as to the state of affairs in this country, as you wish, as we seldom, if ever, see an Indian paper, and one can believe *nothing* one hears, but every one agrees out here that we have some roughish work before us, and that India will *never again* be what it was, so entirely is confidence shaken.'

Brigadier-General (afterwards Major-General Sir) F. H. Franks was in command of a force of 5600 men (of whom 2000 were Europeans) which was doing good work in breaking up the rebels in Southern Oude with mobile

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columns. The Bays were first in action on January 23, when Franks attacked and defeated the mutineers at Nusrutpore, capturing 21 guns and inflicting a loss of 1800 on the enemy, with only eleven casualties on the British side. Two squadrons of the Bays were engaged under the command of Major J. Percy Smith, an officer attached to the Regiment from the 10th Hussars when the Bays were preparing for their voyage to India. One of the squadrons, led by Captain F. G. Powell, made a brilliantly successful charge. Its losses were nearly half those of the whole action on the British side, five men wounded. Seven horses were killed or wounded. The small cost at which many of these victories of the Indian Mutiny were won, shows how poor a stand the Sepoys made in the open without the guidance of their former British officers. But fighting on the defensive in cities and towns they were formidable opponents.

From the standpoint of historians of India or of the British Army, the engagement of Nusseratpoor, as will be seen, was a small affair; but Seymour's account of it to his mother still has its peculiar interest for readers of this book, so we shall do well to reproduce it almost in full. His letter is dated January 30, 1858:

'. . . Since I last wrote to you I have however been in action. On the night of the 22nd, after having been in bed and asleep for about an hour, I was awoke by the adjutant saying that I was to march immediately with my own and another squadron of the regiment, under our junior major, on a secret expedition of a few days' duration. We got our saddles on our horses, and were very soon ready to start, but after awaiting further orders for more than two hours at our horses' heads, were turned in again. However we were not doomed to be disappointed, for we (3rd and 4th Squadrons) left Allahabad the next day at 11 a.m. accom-

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panied by a troop of Royal Horse Artillery, the whole under the command of Lieut.-Colonel D'Aguilar, of the Artillery, and after marching by a circuitous route of upwards of 30 miles, joined a division of infantry and foot infantry, under Brigadier-General Franks, at a place called Secundra. We soon learned for what purpose we had been sent there, viz., to attack the next and the following day two strong positions of mutineers in a jungle, within a few miles of the place, but with uncertain and conflicting intelligence as to the precise whereabouts. Paraded the following morning at daylight, having roughed it without tents or roof the previous night. Our force mustered about 3000 of all ranks, viz., Bays 198, Horse and Foot Artillery 400, the remainder consisting of Infantry (5 companies H.M. 97th Regiment, and Ghoorkas). Although we paraded very early next day (24th) we did not leave our camping ground until about 9 a.m. and did not come upon the enemy until the afternoon. We found them entrenched in a strong position, in thick jungle, and their fire opened on us somewhat suddenly, our artillery returning their fire pretty fiercely, theirs making no impression on us, only one (artilleryman) being hurt. After this had been going on for some time, our junior major, with our 3rd squadron, thought he could take some of their guns – being on the extreme right – and very pluckily charged, with however no effect, being unable to get over deep nullahs which had not been apparent from even a short distance off; however, we got off cheap, losing but three horses killed and five men slightly wounded, our men managing to take some 25 of the enemy. It had the effect of making the enemy budge, for they soon after retired from their position under a heavy, though distant, fire from our artillery and infantry, leaving two of their guns in our possession, better certainly than none, though I think we (the expedition) ought to have managed to get

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some more, for we hear that they took away nine with them. It was impossible to pursue them in their flight, for the jungle was so dense that no cavalry could act in it. I nearly got into a scrape, for being towards the end of the action on the left flank with my squadron, under the orders of the officer commanding the artillery, and supporting his guns, and being far in advance with my trumpeter, I discovered a large body of the enemy retiring across our left front, so I rode back to my chief as hard as I could to report this, but could not get him to move up quickly, but at last when he did, I obtained permission from him to move on further with a subaltern and about thirty men, which we did as hard as we could go, for about a mile. We caught up the enemy, but could not follow them, they having literally buried themselves in the jungle, where we could not follow them, and whilst trying our best to get on, under a heavy fire of musketry, we were ordered back. Luckily and marvellous to relate, we sustained no loss, how, I cannot conceive, as their balls came pouring in on us pretty thick.'

On the following day, January 31, he added the following lines:

'. . . The Governor-General (Lord Canning) is to be here on Tuesday, to meet Sir Colin Campbell, who is coming down here for that purpose – report says for the latter to take counsel of the former relative to a proposal of five chiefs of Oude, relative to giving up Nana Sahib, Lucknow, etc., revealing the plot conditionally that their property and lives are saved to them. Every one hopes that this, if true, may not be granted, nor do I think it likely that it will be.

'I never was a grumbler, but really this life is miserable; every one is disgusted. India must have been a luxurious, pleasant place, but I am sure it is that no longer. You

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cannot imagine the wreck of the European bungalows throughout this part of the land. Everything that seemed to appertain to the English or Europe has been rased to the ground. Dozens of bungalows are in ruins, in fact, none remain, and yet what strikes the newcomer as most wonderful is, that with the voice of their country upraised against us throughout the length and breadth of the land, we should have such a hold on them as we again have.

'We arrive at Cawnpore, I believe, in eight days' time, and Cawnpore is 45 miles from Lucknow.'

In February the Bays were ordered to march northwards from Allahabad to join the force of about 20,000 men with which the Commander-in-Chief, Sir Colin Campbell,[1] was moving on Lucknow. This large city, the old capital of Oude, had been the centre of the rebel resistance since the fall of Delhi. From the early days of the Mutiny it had been the scene of fighting, and this was the fourth and final British advance upon it. In the summer of 1857, Lucknow had passed into the possession of the Mutineers, and the remnant of British troops with the other Europeans had held out through the first siege in the Residency and other buildings in its suburbs. Havelock, with a small force, had fought his way to their help just when the position seemed

[1]Colin Campbell was one of the most brilliant soldiers of a time that produced not a few great leaders in war. Born at Glasgow in 1792, the son of a carpenter, he was given an ensign's commission in 1808. His first campaign was the hapless Walcheren Expedition. One result of it was that all through his long life he was subject to occasional attacks of ague (or, as we say now, malaria); he served all through the Peninsular War, missed Waterloo by being sent to America, and saw service next in China in 1842. He gained his K.C.B. in the Sikh War, commanded for three years at Peshawur, and commanded the Highland Brigade in the Crimea. His was the famous 'thin red line' that saved Balaklava. When he was given the Command-in-Chief in India on the day that the news of the Mutiny reached London, he was in his sixty-fifth year. For his success there he was given the rank of Field-Marshal, and raised to the Peerage as Lord Clyde. He died in 1863, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

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hopeless, and rescuers and rescued had then to endure a second siege. In the autumn Colin Campbell had relieved the hard-pressed, improvised fortress of the Residency, but his force was not sufficient to attempt the capture of the city, so after his victory he retired, bringing away to safety what was left of the garrison and the civilians. For some months after this, Lucknow was in possession of the rebels, who were reinforced to large numbers from the districts already swept by the British columns. In the early spring of 1858 the city was held by 130,000 men, a mixed force of various qualities 'from the regular Sepoy to the matchlock-man following his chief.'

The operations of Colin Campbell's little army against the city began on March 1. The Queen's Bays joined his force on the 3rd. They were first attached to a column of all arms under Sir James Outram at the forcing of the crossings of the Goomtee River. On the morning of the 6th, the same two squadrons that had been in action at Nusrutpore in January made another brilliant charge under Major Percy Smith, with the loss of only two casualties (Corporals Hunt and Nicholls killed). Lucknow was captured and cleared of the enemy on March 16.

During the operations the brunt of the fighting had fallen upon the infantry, and the losses of the Bays in action were not heavy – 1 officer and 3 N.C.O.'s killed and 1 officer and 5 troopers wounded – 11 in all. But there was a heavy toll of deaths by sickness during the Lucknow operations and in the following weeks of the spring. These included two valuable officers, Major John G. Price and Riding-Master Kirk, and 1 sergeant-major, 3 sergeants and 41 other ranks – 47 deaths in all in a total strength of 450. Many others were invalided by illness.

For services in the Lucknow operations, Colonel William Campbell, now the senior officer of the Bays, received the

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C.B., and Captains C. S. Hutchinson and W. H. Seymour the Brevet of Major.

Here again we may break off from our general narrative to insert some portions of Seymour's letters home. Writing to his mother on February 14, 1858, from 'Maharajpore, one day's march from Cawnpore,' he tells how he and his party reached Futtehpore, in charge of some prisoners, on February 6, and how, on their arrival there, a telegraphic message from headquarters ordered them to remain. He continues:

'. . . On the 8th the left wing (mine again) were turned out at a moment's notice, and by another telegraphic message, were off in an hour's time, on a three days' trip. Our force consisting of the left wing, "Bays" (mine and another squadron), and two guns of R.H. Artillery, the whole under the command of our junior major, Percy Smith. Our orders, to go in search of a Madras force of one infantry regiment and 4 guns, sent from Futtehpore two days previously with Brigadier Carthew, and to co-operate with them against a force of the mutineers – strength and whereabouts as usual uncertain. Off we got at 3 p.m. and marching until 9 p.m., bivouacked in the open (as before on our last expedition) at Binkee. We could hear no tidings of our friends, who had however been here the night before, so the next morning at 4 o'clock off we went again, and marching until mid-day, had to give up the chase. Failing to find the Madrassees, who however we heard had driven the rebels across the Jumna, and had returned to Binkee, we rested our horses and selves for a couple of hours, and retraced our steps to Binkee, which place we reached at 10 p.m. and where we found our friends, who had not even had a chance of firing a shot, the Sepoys, etc., having cut and run at their approach, leaving their camp for loot

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(plunder) and crossing the Jumna by boats, where, for want of means, it was impossible to follow them. This account consoled us a little, as we should have been preciously disgusted if the Madrassees had "cut us out." The following day we all returned to Futtehpore, much fatigued, having roughed it for two nights, besides being in the sun and our saddles all the day-time. On the 12th (day before yesterday) we continued our route to Cawnpore, where we hope to make no stop, continuing our march to Lucknow. We are all well, and having left our sick behind us at Allahabad (where we have a depot for sick, recruits, and young horses) have hardly an invalid with us. Our men have certainly become wonderfully acclimatised and are in great spirits at the idea of taking Lucknow, etc., etc. Six weeks from hence will have decided all, and will, I trust, see us *en route* for cantonment at Meerut, Umballah, or some good quarter for the summer months. I suspect, however, that we shall be wanted next cold season, as the country will be for a long time in an unsettled state, even after the fall of Lucknow, etc., etc.'

Two days later, in a short note headed simply 'Cawnpore,' he adds:

'. . . We marched in here yesterday morning. All is desolation around, not an European bungalow or edifice standing, churches and all destroyed. One has, of course, visited the "slaughter-house," "well," "compound defended by General Wheeler," etc., etc. – all is desolation. One scarcely knows what regiments are here, but I have discovered the 23rd Fusiliers and the 3rd battalion Rifle Brigade. We (Bays) move across the Ganges *en route* for Lucknow in a day or two – perhaps to-morrow, our brigade consisting of Bays, 7th Hussars and two regiments of

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Irregular Cavalry, under Brigadier Campbell. Another cavalry brigade consists of 9th Lancers, etc., etc.'

Here in full is a letter dated 'March 5, 1858, The Dilkoosha Camp, before Lucknow':

'My dearest Mother, – As I foretold in my letter to you, posted the day before yesterday, we marched that night at 10 o'clock. A long march so far as time went, and with the exception of Lord Raglan's march round Sebastopol, after the "Alma," the most exciting one I have had, 15 miles, but 12 hours accomplishing it. The Dilkoosha (deer park) had been taken the previous day, and for this place we departed. We arrived at Alumbagh during the night, our force consisting of "Bays," Artillery, 2 battalions Rifle Brigade, and 23rd Fusiliers, and a long train of carts of "Material." After passing through, we had to feel our way through Jellalabad (a mud fort), taken by us some hours before, I believe, and daylight showed us our friends (?) the Pandies, around the doomed city of Lucknow. The gentlemen, however, took great pains to keep at a respectful distance, in fact, would not let us (cavalry) get near them; however, taking advantage of our passing through jungle, they managed to set fire to two of the carts, which fortunately instead of containing ammunition, merely contained chopped sugar-cane for the cattle. Reached our camping ground, as above, at 10 a.m. (yesterday) having made a circuitous march round Lucknow. Dead beat, we were glad to get our horses picketted, and I slept like a top from breakfast until dinner time – not so fortunate however were all of us, for nearly half the regiment went off on picquet duty. The duties of the cavalry are very hard, our horses being always saddled up, and we have all kinds of outpost duty to perform. This morning I have been again under fire. Rising with the sun, some of us went off to have

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a look at Lucknow. We got two capital views of the city, the one from just in front of our camp, where are some of our batteries, though at the risk of several bobs of head. The place seems as strong as John Sepoy can make it – very strong indeed, and unless they "bolt" we shall have a severe tussle for it. Of large extent, full of large strong buildings. After taking a good synopsis of the town from a palace in our possession, we cantered off to see our friends of Nusseratpoor (General Franks' corps) who have just arrived at Sultanpore, and whilst inspecting a pontoon bridge we are making across the Goomtee, the Pandies came out of the city in great force to drive us off, but a shot or two from us sent their Sowars (cavalry troopers) galloping off. These fellows (Sowars) are the greatest cowards you can conceive; the 9th Lancers say that ever since the mutiny first broke out they have not killed 100 of them, though there are 25,000 of them. The weather becomes sensibly hotter every day. Whilst I am writing, the order has come for us to be off this evening along with the 9th Lancers, on a two days' dowr (*anglice*, excursion), "cooked provisions, tents left standing," so away we are!'

And here are two extracts from letters dated March 8 and March 14 respectively – the first from 'Camp Fyzabad Road, before Lucknow':

'. . . About 10 a.m. we came on bodies of cavalry and infantry of the enemy. "Bays" ordered to the front to "charge and pursue!" Away we went as hard as possible, Major Percy Smith and I leading. We did not stop for three miles, cutting down, pursuing and cutting up the pandies right up to Lucknow, and across the river. We are told the most gallant, smartest, though somewhat rash thing that

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has been done before Lucknow. Mr. Russell perhaps will tell you how many we cut down, though he has not been with us!! Alas! however, we lost our best officer, shot dead alongside and within five yards of myself, the nearest of all, with some fifteen men, to Lucknow. Poor Percy Smith, our Junior-Major! The "recall" had just been sounding all over the place for us, and we had just been polishing off some 50 infantry that we had got in a body. He fell without a groan, and I and four of my troop tried to bring his body off, but their cavalry bore down on us in such numbers that it was impossible. We, however, Heaven knows how, got his helmet, sword, pistol, watch and medals, which I cantered off with, the last but one to leave the spot; the remaining one being a corporal of my troop, whose horse would not let him get up again – this poor fellow was cut into ribbons! I returned without a scratch, though my charger got a nasty sabre wound on his off foreleg, which will prevent my riding him for some time. Our veterinary surgeon says that another eighth of an inch would have done for him. I cut three fellows down, besides hitting one or two others. All this seems perhaps like egotism, but I cannot help telling it to you. We roughed it in the open that night (night before last), and had nothing to eat all that day or night – no baggage being up.

'Yesterday, I was out all day in command of the largest party I have yet commanded, protecting a working party clearing a road from the Dilkoosha here, and we got up some heavy guns last night. My force consisting of one squadron "Bays," one troop 9th Lancers, Watson's Horse, two Horse Artillery guns, and 100 Sikh Infantry. Some of my troop horses are frightfully wounded. I never saw such cuts. My troop alone, we fancy, cut up over 70 sepoys, and I had only 45 men mounted in the morning. . . . And now adieu, my dearest mother. God's blessing attend you.

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Keep well, and believe me always your most affectionate son.'

The second was headed 'Camp, North side of Lucknow':

'. . . On the 9th, it happened that I was cavalry captain in camp, and having wandered to the front, got up just in time to become a spectator of the attack on the N.E. side of the city on that day, when the "Yellow House" and several mosques, and a considerable portion of this part of the town were taken. It was the prettiest attack I have ever seen made, and the Pandies were sent flying in all directions, and it ended in our coming into more than we wanted that day. Our camp, consequent on the operations in front, being left with but few troops, was in some danger, for large bodies of the enemy's cavalry kept threatening us; we could however only get near them for a moment during the day. These Pandies hovering about caused us to strike our tents, etc., so we had to rough it in the open that night. The next day we (cavalry) made an extensive reconnaissance, and cut up a lot of fellows in various places, though I am sorry to say, with the loss of one of our best officers, Sandford, of the Sikh Irregulars, who was shot through the head approaching the armed village. The following day we had again a hard day's work, working close round the city, "cutting up" as we went. The extent of Lucknow would surprise you – it seems endless.'

The last four letters of the collection are so full of human interest that we cannot resist the temptation to give them exactly as they stand, without any omission:

'"Bays" Camp, Moosabagh, Lucknow,
'*April 13th*, 1858.

'My dearest Mother, – I do not know how it is, but

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though we are leading a comparatively idle life, my time, with one thing and another, is fully occupied – which is quite as it should be; for nothing is more wretched than either being idle, or feeling that one has nothing to do. I mention this, as I ought to have begun another letter to you ere this.

'The Headquarters Staff march to-morrow. I suppose they will find themselves at Simla before long – lucky people! I fear we shall not have a quiet hot season of it, a squadron of ours having just gone off with the expedition to Fyzabad. They will, I am afraid, continually work the unfortunate 8000 left to take care of Lucknow.

'*April* 14.—An extra six months' batta has been granted us for the taking of Lucknow – 1095 rupees (109.10.0) a Captain's share. Prize money we are to get – perhaps years hence. They dig up and find rupees, jewels, valuables, etc., every day, in and around Lucknow; five per cent. being given to natives who give information. There is, and has been for some time, and will be all the hot season, a daily sale of prize things. Some of our people have spent small fortunes at it. It is the lounge of the morning, and a dangerous one too, for one's pocket. Hitherto I have expended but thirty rupees at it. One of my purchases being a "tulwar" or native sabre, with a gilt handle and velvet case, for which gaudy toy I gave eleven rupees; it turns out that the huge handle is silver; and it, alone, is valued at fifty rupees. This morning I gave ten rupees for twenty yards of fine Scotch cambric (brand new) one and a quarter yards in breadth. Is this dear? – and what would it cost in the "ould countrie"?

'Although we have been through the roughest campaign I believe ever known in India, and we are still roughing it, and are likely to rough it until this time twelve months, still I confess I do not dislike the country. I am perfectly happy

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here, and enjoy better health than I did in Ireland, barring the fever that I have just had. Every one tells us that we have not seen India – things are so topsy-turvy; and this, I believe, is the case. Ergo, if I do not dislike the country now, the chances are I shall like it very much indeed when (?) we get to a decent up-country cantonment.

'By dint of chopping and changing I have now got hold of a decentish lot of servants (in all fifteen), and get on with them better than many of my neighbours.

'I want nothing from England – in this I am fortunate – but many thanks for your thoughts of me in this respect. I am at present (in this camp life) living on half my Captain's pay, or at any rate a very little more than half.

'Weather, very hot! – old Indians say so, and sleep out of doors. I do not find it so very, very warm – newcomers do not, their first hot season, I believe.

'We are left with 8000 troops, if so many.

'*Moveable Column, near Lucknow, April 15th.* – We (two squadrons) left our camp at 5 a.m. yesterday, and form part of a Moveable Column under the command of Brigadier Eveleigh – comprising some 1000 Cavalry, Artillery (heavy and light), and 2400 Infantry from 20th, 23rd, 53rd and 3rd Battalion Rifle Brigade and Sappers. News has arrived that General Hope Grant has been surprised; and we may be off to his relief, but I do not think it likely. We are encamped not far from the Dilkoosha, from whence I have before dated a letter. The thermometer in my tent yesterday was 112 Fahrenheit, and a punkah-wallah at work!

'I trust you are well and happy. I pray that you may be.

'Good-bye, my dearest mother.

'Always your most affectionate Son.'

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'MOVEABLE COLUMN, OUTSIDE LUCKNOW,
'*April 23rd*, 1858.

'MY DEAREST MOTHER,—One of our officers has gone home sick, and two are going off to the Hills (Simla) on medical certificate for six months. One of them is Price, our Junior Major. He and the youngster who accompanies him to the Hills both caught my fever (I mean gastric); and my servant Smith has also had it, as also many of our men. It leaves one very debilitated; and I thought I should have been sent away somewhere, almost despairing of getting strong; but, all of a sudden, one morning I felt a change come over me, became stronger and stronger, and now never felt better, stronger or healthier; in fact, it has done me good.

'We are shockingly exposed where we are now, for the sake of regularity, our camp being in Brigade order; whereas, where the rest of the regiment is (at the Moosabagh) we were somewhat sheltered under a tope of mango trees. We all therefore wish this Moveable Column at an end, although they will find some other amusement of a like nature for us soon after we go back to the Moosabagh, I suppose, as they say the Cavalry are to be out all the hot season. It will be a long time before "India is quiet again." I look forward to being on active service for the next twelve months; I mean until the commencement of the next hot season. I have been living on the contents of saddle-bags since leaving Calcutta; and shall not see my heavy baggage, I suppose, for a year or a year and a half. I have, however, nearly everything I want; in fact, in writing to Calcutta the other day, I could only think of tea and a sponge.

'The townspeople are coming back to Lucknow fast, having all fled; the consequence is, that we shall have capital bazaars. If they had remained, or merely kept away for even some hours, they would not have been nearly

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ruined, leaving their dwellings to be plundered by our hordes of camp-followers, who are pretty handy at loot.

'*Bunnee Bridge* (*nearly midway between Lucknow and Cawnpore*), *April 26th.* – What between the Sepoys and our Generals, it is being "taken out of us" uncommonly. The Moveable Column at Dilkoosha dispersed to their quarters in and around Lucknow the day before yesterday, returning with many sick. We brought in out of our Wing (Wing, *i.e.* half a regiment) three sick officers – two with fever, caused by the exposed position we were in, as before mentioned. Well! we fully expected to have a little rest under our mango tope at the Moosabagh – a rest, however, of but twenty-four hours for me! for at 1 p.m. yesterday, down came an order at a gallop for the other Wing to jump into their saddles immediately and be off – that a large force of Sepoys had attacked Bunnee Bridge, where we have a small Madras force, burnt villages, and cut the telegraph! This latter is true! The Colonel (Brisco) —— and both Majors being on the sick list, I had to go off in command of the Wing. Immediately after we had left, and when at the place of meeting the remainder of the Moveable Column under Brigadier Eveleigh five miles off, we heard that the "immediate" order had been countermanded, arriving at the Moosabagh too late for us. Such was our smartness in getting off! Consequently we had been without a morsel to eat from breakfast yesterday until now – mid-day to-day! Marched all last night, and reached this place at sunrise – found a Sepoy force of 3000 had only shown themselves yesterday, and are now eighteen miles off. Our tents, etc. etc., have come up, and we are now making up for lost time.

'We are off, I suppose, to-night after these Sepoys; but whether we shall catch them or not remains to be proved. As we are all as keen as mustard, if we do happen to come

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across them I fancy they will fare badly. My men are behaving capitally, and I have no trouble whatever with them (200). I hear we are to be out and about for about a fortnight. The Bombay mail goes out from this place the day after to-morrow; and I hardly like chancing our return to-morrow here, although we have our camp standing, so think I shall post this now.

'Good-bye, my dearest mother.

'Ever believe me your affectionate Son.

'P.S.—Brigadier Horsford's Column joins our camp here in a day or two. This savours of work!'

'Moosabagh Camp, Lucknow,
'*May 8th*, 1858.

'My dearest Mother,—My last letter was posted at Bunnee Bridge on the 26th, the day prior to an expected "affair" which, however, never came off. On the 27th the Cavalry and Artillery (at Bunnee) went out in search of the enemy; but, reconnoitring over some extent of country, no enemy could be found, so we returned to our camp. At Bunnee we remained a week, when we were relieved by another column under General Grant, and came back here in two marches. My party was particularly fortunate in bringing back a few sick, some of our united force bringing in a great many, and losing men of sunstroke – now, I regret to say, by no means an uncommon termination to the British soldier's existence here, owing to the immense exposure he is obliged to undergo.

'We are the healthiest body of troops in or near Lucknow, and yet we have or had over 60 in hospital, out of our strength of 450. Nine of our officers are struck off duty, sick; in fact, I am one of few who are in a perfect state of salubrity, for all our Cornets are at the depot, or on their way out here. Thank God, I am holding out famously, and

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really never felt better than at the present moment; and I am certain that, with a moderately sound constitution, and leading a regular life, not exposing oneself unnecessarily to the sun, it is an easy matter to get on in this climate; but it is not a climate to trifle with oneself in, as one immediately feels it to one's cost. Within the past week we lost several (about a dozen) men of sunstroke – a few hours' illness. Our Regimental-Serjeant-Major, a fine young Dragoon – a perfect rider, and a man who would have held H.M.'s commission before long – died of it three days since. I have not a single Serjeant left with my troop, my Troop-Major and all being in hospital with fever. This Troop-Serjeant-Major of mine has never been near a hospital during his service of fifteen years, until now!

'I am grieved to say that we fear our Junior Major (Price) is dying. He had a relapse of fever, and has been delirious for three days. He is in great danger, and I fear he will not get over it – a right dear fellow, for whom I have the greatest regard. Our Senior Major is still ill. I am Second-in-Command of the Regiment, owing to the two Regimental-Majors being sick, and Colonel Campbell, a Brigadier, at Cawnpore.

'You never saw a set of fellows so disgusted as ours are with this country, with but one or two exceptions. Some swear they would sooner break stones in England than remain here. We are certainly far worse off than any troops here, being the only ones in tents! – thermometer upwards of 113 Fahr. in them!

'*May 9th.* – We had a dust-storm last night about bed-time, and having had a rehearsal of it at Bunnee, I at once turned into bed. It was as bad a dust-storm as our "savans" have ever seen; and on awaking this morning, I found myself and my worldly goods a quarter of an inch deep in sand! This morning the thermometer has fallen to 84

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Fahrenheit, but it will be as hot again to-morrow. Poor Price is a little better this morning – not much. The doctors were up with him all night, as he was in convulsions. There is, I fear, little or no hope for him. This temporary change in the weather has rallied all our sick to-day in a wonderful manner.

'We are in an uncertain state of mind; fearing we may be sent on another dowr (*i.e.* sort of field service); but I do not think it likely, as there is every chance of our being paid a visit here by some of the thousands of the enemy hovering about Oude. Unless a vast body more of troops are sent out here, we shall never decimate these fellows, and decimate we must, before we can have rest. I fear in England a strong feeling is rising rather in favour of these villains. Ah! that invariably mistaken muffish "British Public," always led astray!

'And now, adieu. God bless and protect you, my dearest mother. I trust you are well and happy. Keep so; a contented mind and an even temperament will generally ensure health.

Ever your most affectionate Son.'

'MOOSABAGH CAMP, LUCKNOW,
'*May 15th*, 1858.

'MY DEAREST MOTHER, – The weather here is terribly hot, and we are still in tents. A wing of the Regiment returned from a some-days' dowr to-day; and they have, of course, brought in several sick.

'The Headquarters wing (remaining here, and with which I have been) buried four men the day before yesterday; and we have daily cases of sunstroke – yesterday no less than seven.

'Among our losses are poor Price (whose illness I mentioned to you in my last) and our Riding-Master: the former of fever and the latter of sunstroke. Price's death

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gives me my majority without purchase. I am the third Major who has held this majority within three months. Poor Price died three days since – unconscious for several days previously. Kirk (the Riding-Master) died at Cawnpore (where we have a depot of untrained horses, and recruits and young officers) after a few hours' illness – promoted from the ranks seven months since!

'As well as ever! not even a finger ache. I attribute this to diet and regular habits. One of our youngsters is going to England, sick, and another to Simla.

'The Sepoys are all round us here, and, as they know our garrison is weak and sickly, intend to take a mean advantage of our plight, and attack us; and as this is the period of a great Mahommedan Feast, and from spies, we expect an attack almost hourly, and during the next month – an uncommonly pleasant state of things, with the thermometer at 115 Fahrenheit in tents!

'*May 20th.* – The weather, which has been kinder to us for a day or two, is as intensely hot again as ever – thermometer any height! We have some more subjects for the hills.

'The prize jewels of Lucknow are to be sold on Saturday. Reports say that Sir Colin's share of prize money here alone is £200,000 – not rupees – sovereigns!

'I am suffering torments from "prickly-heat" – a sign of health though a painful and annoying one.

'*May 22nd.* – Again many thanks for the various newspapers you send me. They are a source of much amusement to many; for when I have finished reading them, I send them to my troop and my sick. I have out of my troop of 48 men, 17 sick. This is pretty dreadful – eh? The weather is intensely hot. We had nine fresh cases of *coup-de-soleil* yesterday – an expensive arrangement to the country, keeping us in the field during a hot season; and this is a particularly hot season, old Indians say.

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'The sale of the Lucknow prize jewels commenced this morning. It will last many days at least. I did not even make a bid! English jewellers might make a mint of money; but the diamonds, etc., are so badly cut and set, that a stranger is quite deceived as to their worth – dirt cheap, I should say, they are selling, but it requires a certain amount of confidence to buy them.

'And now, adieu, my dearest mother; and with much love,

'Believe me ever,

'Your most affectionate Son.'

The Bays were next attached to a flying column of 4000 British and Sikh troops under Sir Hope Grant, which was engaged in breaking up a well-quipped enemy force of 20,000 in the district between the Goomtee and the Ganges. On March 23 they were engaged at the action of Koorsee, and one squadron, under Captain Hutchinson, was in the action at Barree.

On June 13, Sir Hope Grant fought a hotly contested action at the crossing of a stream near Nawabgunge on the road to Fyzabad; the enemy was in such strength that, according to an eye-witness, 'at one time our small force was completely surrounded and fought in every direction.' The enemy was beaten off with a loss of some 600 killed, and no small part in the victory was due to a successful charge by the 7th Hussars and three squadrons of the Bays under Major W. H. Seymour.

There was so much sickness at the time that of the six troops of the Bays engaged, only two had their usual commanders with them (Captains H. M. Stapylton and O. P. C. Bridgman).

Colonel William Campbell died on July 6, to the abiding sorrow of every officer and man of his command. He had

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recently been promoted Brigadier-General, with command of the Cawnpore Division of the Bengal Army, but did not survive to assume his new duties. In September, Colonel Hylton Brisco having retired from the service, Lieut.-Colonel W. H. Seymour became Colonel in command of the Queen's Bays.

After his victory at Nawabgunge, Sir Hope Grant had occupied Fyzabad, and dispatched Brigadier Horsford to defeat the enemy at Sultanpur.

On September 21 a squadron of the Bays led by Captain E. Graham Powell brilliantly distinguished itself in a minor skirmish at Dawah. In a charge and pursuit of the enemy, who for once put up a stout resistance at close quarters, Corporal Walls, Trooper Hart and Trooper McGuinness were killed and several others wounded. A few days later the same squadron took part, under Brigadier-General Purnell's command, in driving a mutineer force out of Selimpur. Early in October the Regiment received orders to act as part of a punitive column under Brigadier (Sir George) Barker, R.A., and a sharp affair took place at Jamo on the 8th.

It was on this occasion that the Queen's Bays won their first Victoria Crosses. While Colonel Seymour in person was leading his men to the attack of a party of the 42nd Bengal Native Infantry concealed in a jungle, he was wounded and cut down. Their Colonel must have lost his life but for the gallantry of his two orderlies, Private Charles Anderson and Trumpeter Thomas Monaghan, by whose united exertions he was rescued and carried from the field. Both of these brave fellows were recommended for and duly received the Victoria Cross.[1] On the same day, a little trumpeter of the Bays, a boy named John Smith, engaged in single combat, cut down and killed an enemy Sepoy.

[1] *London Gazette*, November 11, 1862.

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The operations for the slow but sure re-conquest of Oudh proceeded during the autumn and winter months. While Colonel Seymour and the main body of the Regiment continued temporarily under Brigadier Barker's orders, and participated in the storming of the fort of Birwah on October 21, one squadron, commanded by Lieutenant Francis Lavington Payne, was engaged at the passage of the Gogra River near Fyzabad, under Sir Hope's immediate direction, on the 24th.

The closing operations of the Indian Mutiny being prolonged far into the spring of 1859, both Colonels Walker and Seymour took part in a couple of actions in which the enemy were routed near Bungdon, in the trans-Gogra area of Oudh, on April 22–7. Meanwhile, two squadrons commanded by Major Hutchinson penetrated as far into the northern frontier as the Jowah Pass in the lower mountain region of Nepal. The discomfited mutineers were expelled from this Pass in fine style, the Bays' only casualty being the slight wounding of Cornet Torrens, acting as Aide-de-camp to Sir Hope Grant.

When at long last, on June 5, 1859, the Regiment entered cantonments at Lucknow, it had been on active service engaged with the enemy for a term of twenty consecutive months. In the ensuing distribution of rewards, Colonel Seymour was made a Companion of the Bath, Major Hutchinson received the Brevet of Lieutenant-Colonel, while Captain Bridgman 'would have been made a Brevet-Major had not his death taken place in the interim.'[1] Colonel Walker shortly proceeded to China for the war of 1860 as Assistant-Quartermaster-General in Sir Hope Grant's command, and retired from the Army on the successful conclusion of that campaign.

[1] *Regimental Records.*

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After his arduous duties and heavy responsibilities throughout the Mutiny, Lord Canning's term as Governor-General of India was drawing to a close. On his farewell tour of the North-West Provinces he was attended by a squadron of the Queen's Bays as guard of honour and escort. They were inspected in November 1860, and were warmly complimented by F. M. Sir Hugh Rose,[1] Commanding-in-Chief in India. Exactly a twelvemonth afterwards they provided a squadron as escort to Lord Elgin, Lord Canning's successor as Viceroy, on his attendance at the inaugural installation of the newly created Order of the Star of India.

If it had been anticipated by officers and men of the Bays that after their prolonged term of Eastern service they might be permitted an early return to England, such hopes were doomed to disappointment. 'A false alarm' of their pending embarkation for home took place in 1861, but it was decided by the military authorities to give precedence to corps that had served in the Crimea in 1854–5. Instead, the Bays were moved to Benares, early in 1862.

In that year there was an order that the Regiment's overall stripes and cap-bands be altered from yellow to buff in colour, so as to match the facings, and velvet to be replaced by cloth as facings. A special letter from Sir Hugh Rose as Commander-in-Chief commended the Queen's Bays on their high efficiency and good discipline.

In 1863 the regimental establishment was reduced to: 1 lieutenant-colonel, 2 majors, 7 captains, 7 lieutenants, 7 cornets, 1 paymaster, 1 adjutant, 1 musketry instructor, 1 riding-master, 1 quartermaster, 1 surgeon and 2 assistant surgeons, 1 veterinary surgeon, 37 sergeants, 28 corporals,

[1]He was raised to the Peerage as Earl of Strathnairn in 1866, and died in 1885.

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THE REGIMENT MARCHING OUT OF WYNBERG. 7TH JANUARY 1902

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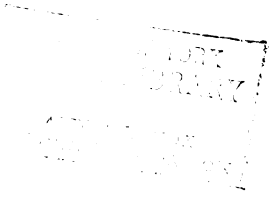

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7 trumpeters, 7 farriers, 434 rank and file, and 490 troop horses.

Somewhat belatedly, perhaps, it was not until April 3, 1863,[1] that Her Majesty the Queen-Empress, 'in commemoration of the services of the Regiment in assisting in restoring order in Her Majesty's Indian Dominions, has been graciously pleased to command that the word "LUCKNOW" be borne on the regimental standards for the capture of Lucknow.'

During 1864–5, two orders were received from home conveying further alterations in the uniform of the Queen's Bays. By the first of these,[2] the object of which was to distinguish one regiment of heavy cavalry from another more easily, 'the present wide loops of yellow lace on the front of the collar entirely hiding the facing now that the collars are cut so much lower, Her Majesty is pleased to order its discontinuance and the substitution of an edging of white braid all round the collar.' At the same time the loop and button on the tunic-cuff was done away with, an 'Austrian knot' of white braid substituted, and the three loops of yellow lace on the skirt were also abolished. By the second Order,[3] the shape of the regimental headgear was improved, strengthened and altered.

Removed to Muttra in the North-West Provinces, there to relieve the 7th Dragoon Guards on January 6, 1865, the Bays passed an inspection by General Sir H. R. Mansfield, K.C.B. (who had succeeded Sir Hugh Rose as Commander-in-Chief in India) in the ensuing November. General Mansfield was pleased to compliment them in the following published Order:

'His Excellency desires to express his thanks for a very excellent Field-day. In the whole course of his service he

[1]Horse Guards, No. 834. [2]Horse Guards, September 22, 1864.
[3]Horse Guards, October 16, 1865.

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has never seen anything better. The Regiment moved with great steadiness, rapidity and precision, the horses well broken and managed, and strict attention must evidently be shown to every detail.'

Later in the same month, the Regiment had the honour of forming the personal escort of the celebrated Mutiny veteran and hero, Sir John (Lord) Lawrence, on his assumption of the dignity of Viceroy of India, this duty including attendance on him at the great Durbar and his sojourn at Agra. Further, by a General Order of the Commander-in-Chief, to take effect in India from April 1, 1867, the establishment of the Queen's Bays was reduced to: 1 colonel, 1 lieutenant-colonel, 2 majors, 7 captains, 7 lieutenants, 7 cornets, 1 paymaster, 1 adjutant, 1 riding-master, 1 quartermaster, 1 surgeon, 2 assistant surgeons, 1 veterinary surgeon, 1 regimental sergeant-major, 7 troop sergeant-majors, 1 quartermaster-sergeant, 1 sergeant-instructor of musketry, 1 paymaster-sergeant, 1 armourer-sergeant, 1 bandmaster-sergeant, 1 saddler-sergeant, 1 farrier-major, 7 farriers, 1 hospital sergeant, 1 sergeant-instructor of fencing, 1 orderly-room clerk, 1 sergeant-cook, 21 sergeants, 1 trumpet-major, 7 trumpeters, 28 corporals and 378 privates.

NOTE

The following racy narrative from the pen of one who styles himself 'An Old Bay, but not a good Sailor!' and who joined the Regiment in 1858, will come in here very fittingly as a tail-piece to the Chapter:

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DESCRIPTION OF A VOYAGE TO INDIA ON A TROOPSHIP SIXTY-SIX YEARS AGO, VIZ., IN 1859

On September 10, 1859, a detachment of Queen's Bays, with detachments of several Infantry Regiments, embarked at Gravesend on the ship *Hanover*, lying in the river Thames. She was a two-decker vessel of 1300 tons burthen. The number on board, exclusive of crew, totalled 595 men and 2 females. On quitting England we found our daily rations were 1 lb. of biscuit, 12 ozs. of meat – always salt meat – never once during the voyage seeing a bit of bread or a bit of fresh meat. We had tea and sugar, of each a small quantity. Water we found was a very valuable asset. The hold of the ship was divided into tanks containing fresh water, and five pints per man was issued every morning, of which the cook claimed three pints per man, this reducing the quantity available for other purposes to two pints per man per diem. When the tank was empty, it was filled with salt water to ballast the ship. The rust from the iron tanks caused the water to become yellow, and it eventually got so bad we had to strain it through a towel before drinking it. The biscuit was like biting a deal-board, it *was* hard I can assure you. The ship was rationed for four months' voyage, and should the voyage last longer, half-rations was the order of the day. Tommy then found himself scantily provided for. Each man was served out with a three-pound stick of tobacco to last the voyage. Smoking was allowed one hour a day on the forecastle, the bugler on duty sounding 'Light Up' and 'Out Pipes.' A breach of this order was severely dealt with for fear of fire. Drill of any sort was simply impossible on account of the crowded state of the vessel. There was no canteen or other place where necessaries could be obtained. Divine Service was held on Sundays, when the Captain of the ship acted as parson. When twenty-eight days out from Gravesend, we sighted Madeira, the only land sighted between England and India. In sight of that island we lay becalmed for twenty-eight days. There the monotony of a troopship was manifest. No boots or shoes were allowed to be worn on board. There was a library, too, such as it was, where a book might occasionally be obtained. Occasionally some little thing such as a shark or a shoal of porpoises or other distant object broke the monotony of daily routine. Medical inspection was carried out daily. To air the messing deck, which served as sleeping room, all hands were turned up on the upper deck. Then one-half had to sit down to allow the other half to walk about. After three months at sea, the Captain of the ship announced that we were just over half of our journey. Consequently half-rations became the order of the day – three pints of water, half-pound of biscuit (and it was hard more ways than one), and half-quantity of everything else. That's where the pleasure of life on a troopship came in. Every man did his own washing with sea-water, for which purpose salt-water soap was supplied (something resembling bees-wax), but if you rubbed for a week, no sign of lather appeared. The drying-ground was over the side of the ship, and on many occasions some villain cut the ropes, allowing all the clothes to drop into the sea. Mangling was left to your own consideration. Most of us folded and sat upon it. I may state that from first to last our food was not of the most appetising kind. On Sundays, boulle soup

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was given for a change, but it wasn't generally approved of, as one mess found a dead mouse in theirs, and another mess found a man's finger with a rag wrapped round it, so that was discontinued after one or two issues. However, there's an end to all things, and after a voyage of 141 days we arrived at Calcutta, many being firmly determined never to return to England under similar conditions. During my stay in India the Suez Canal was opened, and I returned to England in 1871 on H.M.S. *Malabar*, a floating palace compared to the *Hanover*. I may state that the *Malabar* was the first of the five ships built specially for the Indian troop service to pass through the Suez Canal.

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CHAPTER X

Service in Peace Time, Abroad and at Home, 1867–1900

The Queen's Bays remained in India till the winter of 1869. In 1869 there were two inspections at Muttra. The first of these was by Major-General (later Sir) Colin Troup, commanding the Meerut Division on March 25, and the second by Brigadier-General H. Stannus, commanding the Agra Brigade, on October 24. Both of those officers expressed their complete satisfaction at the Regiment's high state of efficiency and discipline.

Ordered to quit Muttra for the Bombay Presidency on November 15, they made an exchange of camp equipment with the 11th Hussars (who were to relieve them at Muttra) at the river Parbutti and, continuing their march, took up quarters at Mhow on December 12. During 1868–9 they were thrice inspected and warmly complimented by the officer commanding the Mhow Division of the Bombay Army, Major-General F. Adams, C.B. That officer was also to have the pleasure of promulgating a Divisional Order when, at long last, the Regiment got the route for old England. It was in the following handsome and eulogistic terms:

'Nusserabad, *August* 26, 1869. – As the 2nd Regiment of Dragoon Guards will have left the Mhow Division before the Major-General purposes to return to Mhow, the Major-General is particularly anxious to assure Colonel Seymour, C.B., the officers, non-commissioned officers, and men of the Queen's Bays of his admiration of the appearance, high tone, and general good conduct evinced by that Regiment

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on all occasions since they have served under his command.'

This eulogy was supplemented by another from Brigadier General W. G. Smyth, who had succeeded to command the Mhow Division.

Nearly a hundred N.C.O.'s and men of the Bays, however, elected to remain in India by transfer to other units as follows: 12 to the 5th Lancers, 9 to the 16th Lancers, 8 to the 3rd Hussars, 17 to the 4th Hussars, 2 to the 11th Hussars, 22 to the 18th Hussars and 21 to the 21st Hussars.

It was on the last day of 1869 that the Regiment embarked at Bombay for 'home' in the troopship *Malabar*. Twelve years had passed since their arrival in India, and in this interval the Suez Canal had been constructed. It was opened in November 1869, and was soon to be the regular route for reliefs to and from India. But the Overland Route by Egypt and the Mediterranean had been for some time in use, and from Suez the Regiment made the railway journey by Cairo to Alexandria. Instead of the long journey of four months by the old Cape Route of 1857, the journey home took only a month, and they had a hearty popular reception on their arrival at Portsmouth on January 31, 1870. They were inspected by Lieut.-General Sir George Buller, commanding the Southern District, and left by rail for Chichester, where a few weeks were spent before moving on to their new depot at Colchester. When they left Chichester, the Major in a farewell speech paid a warm tribute to their good conduct and the popularity they had gained in the city.

In April–May 1870, on the return of the Regiment to England, it was, according to traditional practice, remounted on bay horses. To effect this, forty-four animals of that colour were acquired from each of the following

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units: 1st, 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th Dragoon Guards and 1st (Royal) Dragoons. 'The commanding officer received authority to purchase the remainder up to the establishment.'[1] The regimental custom was now officially recognised by the designation being changed from the 2nd (Queen's) Dragoon Guards to 2nd Dragoon Guards (Queen's Bays).[2]

About the same time the establishment of the Regiment was revised and fixed at: 1 colonel, 1 lieutenant-colonel, 1 major, 7 captains, 7 lieutenants, 3 lieutenants on cornets' pay, 1 paymaster, 1 adjutant, 1 riding-master, 1 quartermaster, 1 veterinary surgeon, 1 regimental sergeant-major, 1 bandmaster, 1 regimental quartermaster-sergeant, 7 troop sergeant-majors, 1 paymaster-sergeant, 1 armourer-sergeant, 1 farrier-major, 4 farriers, 1 saddler-sergeant, 1 hospital sergeant, 1 orderly-room clerk, 1 sergeant-instructor in fencing, 1 sergeant-cook, 21 sergeants, 1 trumpet-major, 7 trumpeters, 21 corporals, 9 shoeing-smiths, 2 saddlers, 1 saddle-tree maker, 374 privates – total, 483 all ranks, with 300 troop-horses.

There were two inspections on August 15 and 16 (by Major-General H. D. White, Inspector-General of Cavalry), and September 16, 1870 (by F.M. the Duke of Cambridge, Commander-in-Chief), at Colchester. Both resulted in high commendation of the Queen's Bays, H.R.H. being pleased to add to his Report that the Regiment was in better order and condition than any cavalry regiment he had seen since its return from India. After the half-yearly inspection on April 15, 1871, Major-General Freeman Murray, commanding the Eastern District, issued a similar encomium.

The Bays were transferred from Colchester to Aldershot in the August of that year, occupying the East Cavalry Barracks and participating in the autumn manœuvres.

[1] *Regimental Records.* [2] Army List, May 1870.

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Major-General Sir T. McMahon, commander of the cavalry at Aldershot, inspected them in October and congratulated Colonel Seymour on the result. Shortly afterwards, Colonel Seymour further enhanced his popularity with all ranks by donating a sum of two hundred guineas – in commemoration of his fourteenth year as Commander of the Regiment – for the purchase of warm clothing for wives and families of men of the Bays. This was in 1872. Colonel Seymour quitted the Regiment in June 1872 on being promoted to General's rank. He was succeeded in the command by Lieut.-Colonel H. H. Steward, who in his turn was succeeded by Major Thomas William Snede, in 1874.

The Queen's Bays were sent to Ireland in 1875, and remained there for five years. Two pleasing incidents of that period were their inspection by their old Colonel, now Major-General Seymour, who was received with a rare outburst of enthusiasm – and their distinction in gaining the record, for two years in succession, of having fewer court-martials than any mounted corps then on Irish soil. The Duke of Cambridge, still Commander-in-Chief, took occasion to congratulate the Regiment on its continued favourable record.

In the last months of the Regiment's stay in Ireland the conflict over the land question developed into a serious crisis, accentuated by a widespread failure of the crops in the west. In several counties the troops were largely reinforced in support of the constabulary and the civil powers. At one time there were some 7000 cavalry, infantry and constabulary under arms in County Mayo alone. The Bays were detailed for this duty early in 1880, at various places in the west of Ireland. Towards the close of the year they were brought back to England, and stationed at Manchester and Liverpool. They went to Aldershot in 1884.

The British intervention in Egypt opened in the summer

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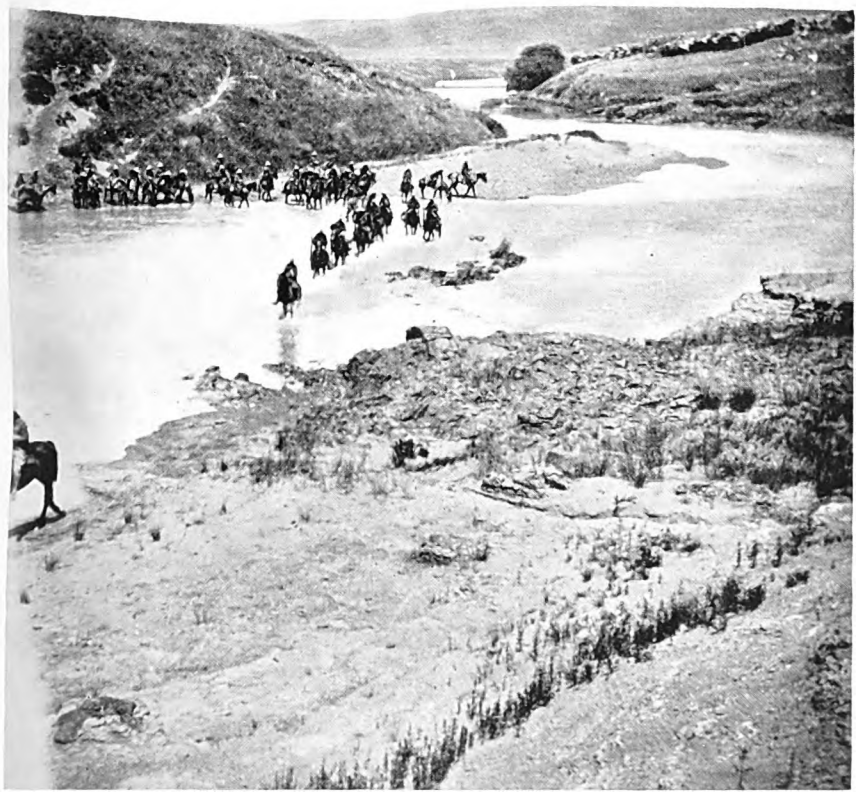

THE QUEEN'S BAYS CROSSING THE ZAND RIVER
LIEUT.-COL. FANSHAWE LEADING

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of 1882 with the bombardment of Alexandria, followed by Lord Wolseley's campaign of Tel-el-Kebir and the advance to Cairo. The long occupation of Egypt then began. The Bays were ordered to supply drafts to be transferred to cavalry regiments of the Army of Occupation. These were formed by calling for volunteers for foreign service. Eighty-three non-commissioned officers and men were thus transferred to the garrison in Egypt, a first draft of 57 going to the 7th Dragoon Guards and a further draft of 28 to the 4th Dragoon Guards. In the summer of 1884, when Wolseley was organising the Gordon Relief Expedition, there was a call for volunteers from the cavalry to serve in a Camel Corps in the projected advance to Khartum. The contingent from the Bays was made up of Captain Gould and Lieutenant Hibbert, with 43 non-commissioned officers and men. They were attached to the Heavy Camel Corps, went up the Nile in the boat expedition, were given their unfamiliar mounts at Kosti, and took part in the march across the Bayuda Desert and the hard-fought action at Abu Klea, where the little detachment had four men killed.

In the autumn of 1885 the Bays were detailed for their second term of service in India. The Regiment, now under the command of Lieut.-Colonel Hemming Lee, left England in the troop-ship *Serapis* on November 21, and reached Umballa on January 3, 1886.

In July, Colonel Lee vacated the command in favour of Lieut.-Colonel Leslie French, who in his turn gave place to Lieut.-Colonel J. J. S. Ashburner, just two years later. The last-mentioned officer went on the retired list almost immediately, however, to be replaced (August 15, 1888) by Lieut.-Colonel F. C. L. Kay. In connection with Umballa, Colonel Cordeaux records a noteworthy incident. When the Queen's Bays took over the horses and native establishment from the 9th Lancers there in 1886, the Jemadar

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Syce Karim Baksh of B Troop said that he had been with the Regiment at Lucknow, and had helped to bring in the body of Major Percy Smith. Passing with horses and syces from regiment to regiment, he had at last come back to the Queen's Bays. So he told Colonel Cordeaux and Major O'Connor when they were taking over for B Troop.

It is particularly noteworthy that in 1886–7 the Bays held the proud record of having less 'crime' in their ranks than not merely any cavalry regiment but *any* regiment in the Army. They were in India for ten years of continuous service. In that period their record in sport was altogether out of the common. It included the winning every year, save one, of the Lloyd Lindsay Mounted Competition, though this was open to all British mounted regiments. Another brilliant incident was the winning, by Regimental Sergeant-Major Greenwood and Sergeant Kent of the Bays, the first and second place respectively in a competition for best 'man-at-arms' in India, inaugurated by the Inspector-General of Gymnasia.

On arrival at Umballa the Bays went in strongly for polo, and each year the Regiment entered for the Inter-Regimental Tournament from 1886–94, except in the year 1889, when they did not compete. That tournament in those years was the premier tournament in India and generally comprised of entries from the British cavalry in India.

The Bays never won the first game in the tournament till the year 1892, when they beat the 7th Hussars in the final with a bit of luck, as Captain Haig (the Field-Marshal Lord Haig of later days) was unable to play for the Hussars, owing to illness.

In 1883 the Bays again won this tournament, meeting the 7th Hussars in the first round and defeating the 16th Lancers in the final.

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THE MAXIM GUN. SOUTH AFRICAN WAR

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In 1894 the Bays won again, after a hard game with the 7th Hussars in the first round.

The teams played were:

1892.	1893, 1894.
Captain Whitla.	Mr. Persse.
Mr. Persse.	Mr. Wilberforce.
Captain Kirk.	Captain Kirk.
Mr. Bushe.	Mr. Bushe.

When the Regiment was quartered at Sialkot and Rawalpindi, they competed each year in the Punjab Tournament at Lahore, and each year except one were defeated in the final by the Maharaja of Patiala's team, of which that great player in those days, Colonel Hira Singh, was a member.

Polo tournaments in India were played then under very strict rules. Each pony under five years old had to be measured the day before the tournament commenced, and all ponies were registered in the Polo Calendar annually. Time played in tournaments was 10 minutes in each round, and any extra time played was deducted from the 10 minutes in the last round. Six rounds were played.

In the Bays' polo team in 1894, of the 24 ponies allowed to be actually played in the tournament, 18 were Arabs, 4 countrybred, 2 Walers or Australians – all 13 hands 3 inches and under.

Racing was not gone in for much by the Regiment in these years, except in small meetings and gymkhanas. Captain Kirk did a good deal of racing in partnership with Captain Sherston of the Rifle Brigade. He owned a very good mare, Engadine, which won several races, chiefly the 'Kurnal Stakes,' for horses bred by General Parrott at the Kurnal Stud. He also owned a very good Australian pony in 'Teddy.'

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During the time at Sialkot, Captain Clark kept a small pack of hounds at Phooklian, on the banks of the Chenab, and had good sport after jackals.

Two of the officers saw active service during the stay of the Regiment in India. Lieutenant W. H. Wilberforce was employed on the Staff of Major-General W. K. Elles in the Hazara operations of 1891. In the same year Lieutenant N. M. Smyth served on the Survey Staff of the Zhob Valley Expedition, and was promoted to the rank of Captain.

Before leaving India for Egypt in 1895, the Regiment had the satisfaction of being notified that their old Commander, Major-General Seymour, by this time promoted Lieutenant-General, had been nominated their Colonel-in-Chief, *vice* General Walker, retired. The Bays reached Egypt in the *Malabar* on October 28. At Cairo they were at once re-armed with the Lee-Metford magazine-carbine – the first mounted formation to receive that weapon; the front rank were also armed with the lance. In November, Lieut.-Colonel J. E. Dewar received the active Colonelcy in place of Lieut.-Colonel Lambert, retired.

Captain W. H. Persse of the Bays was attached to the Egyptian army. Its cavalry had not any regimental organisation but was organised in seven independent squadrons, under British officers who, while thus serving, held the local rank of Major (Bimbashi). Captain Persse saw active service in command of a squadron in all the campaigns from the advance on Dongola in 1896 to the capture of Khartum in 1898. In the campaign of the spring of 1898 against Mahmoud's force on the Atbara, he showed exceptional leadership and initiative in the reconnaissance of the Dervish Zereba by the Egyptian cavalry on March 29. The Egyptian squadrons had to deal with a counter-attack

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FIELD DAY NEAR COLESKOP. DECEMBER 1901

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by a great force of the Dervish cavalry, mostly good fighting men of the Baggara tribes, the best horsemen of the Sudan. He received a Brevet-Majority.

Another officer of the Bays, already mentioned, Captain N. M. Smyth, was attached to Wingate's Intelligence Department of Kitchener's Staff in the advance on Khartum, and he won the Victoria Cross on the Day of Omdurman. The official record runs thus:[1]

'Captain Neville Maskelyne Smyth, 2nd Dragoon Guards. – At the battle of Khartum, on the 2nd of September 1898, Captain Smyth galloped forward and attacked an Arab who had run amok among some camp-followers. Captain Smyth received the Arab's charge and killed him, being wounded with a spear in the arm while so doing. He thus saved the life of one at least of the camp-followers.'

In the same campaign, Farrier-Sergeant Escrett was attached to the Army Veterinary Department of the Expedition, and was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal.

The Queen's Bays were ordered back to England in 1896, and after the outbreak of the South African War in 1899 they were required to furnish drafts for that theatre of operations from time to time. The strength of the Regiment was increased to 32 officers, 72 sergeants, 10 trumpeters, 782 other ranks and 609 horses, in February 1900. It was now in training at Aldershot. At the funeral of Queen Victoria on February 2, 1901, 100 men of the Bays, under Lieut.-Colonel Dewar, marched in front of the gun-carriage which carried the coffin.

One other event of the year 1901 deserves more detailed record. As Captain G. Smith, the Quartermaster of the Regiment, retains a vivid memory of it, we have prevailed on him to chronicle it in his own words:

[1] W.O. Order of November 15, 1898.

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'During the month of August 1901, just prior to the Bays leaving for the South African War, sudden orders were received by the Regiment to furnish a strong mounted detachment to proceed direct by rail to Bangor, North Wales, to assist the local authorities in connection with the strike of quarrymen at Bethesda. Captain R. D. Herron was in command. "A" Squadron being the squadron selected, it received orders at 4.30 p.m., whilst the squadron was at Evening Stables, and within ninety minutes they had paraded in full marching order – sword, lance and carbine – marched to Aldershot Town Station and entrained. This fine performance brought praise from all quarters; in fact, Headquarters, Aldershot Command, consider it a record. Undoubtedly it was a fine piece of work. The Regiment had only returned two days previously from the Cavalry Manœuvres at Salisbury Plain after experiencing seven days' continuous rain. In fact, red jackets, blue patrols, jack-boots, blankets, etc., were all out being dried. Saddles had to be packed, kits to be collected from the drying-line, and men to be relieved off guards, etc.

'After an uneventful journey, passing through Crewe and Chester, the Regiment arrived at Bangor early one morning during August 1901, being met at the station by the Civil and Police officials. It was soon discovered that its presence was not at all popular. The men of the detachment had great difficulty in making themselves understood, as the inhabitants of Bangor spoke only in the Welsh tongue, and it was some time before the Bays knew enough of the language to converse freely with the populace. Strangely, the inhabitants did not have a liking for the Military; however, the good example and behaviour of the men was beyond question, and the people of Bangor simply loved the Regiment, and our three months' stay was made a pleasure. The Regiment was billeted in small parties at the hotels at

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Bangor and the surrounding district. Lord Penrhyn was most kind to the detachment, arranging for sports and tea, etc., in his beautiful castle grounds.

'The whole three months the detachment carried out strong patrol work, and on two occasions turned out suddenly to assist the police. As on former occasions the men displayed great coolness and tact, and no unpleasant incident occurred.

'It was a nice change for the men after the Military Station at Aldershot. Many were the regrets of both civilians and Bays when the day arrived for us to return to Aldershot. More than one Bay returned to civil work at Bangor and took unto themselves a nice Welsh lady as his wife.

'During the stay at Bangor, the detachment gave a Skill-at-Arms display at Carnarvon, including a musical ride. A large number of people witnessed the many feats, it being the first mounted display held at that ancient town. The display consisted of jumping by pairs, lemon cutting, picking up the handkerchief off the ground, sword-post practice, vaulting on horseback, wrestling on horseback, a musical ride lasting thirty minutes, and tent-pegging (section and individual) – all the result of the detachment's own efforts.

' "No crime at all at Bangor" was the proud report of Captain R. D. Herron to Colonel J. E. Dewar, commanding the Regiment at Aldershot, on his return.

'On leaving for South Africa, Lord Penryhn presented each man of the detachment with a pipe and one pound of stick tobacco.'

Finally, and not until November 1901, by which time the main strength of the Boer resistance had to a great extent been broken, the Regiment sailed from Southampton for South Africa in the *Orotava* and *Fortunatus*,

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landing at Cape Town on December 6. They then numbered 24 officers and 513 other ranks, 43 officers' chargers and 445 troop-horses, with Colonel Dewar in command, and with Lieut.-Colonel Fanshawe, Major J. A. Walker, Captain T. Ward and Captain R. D. Herron as his principal subordinates.

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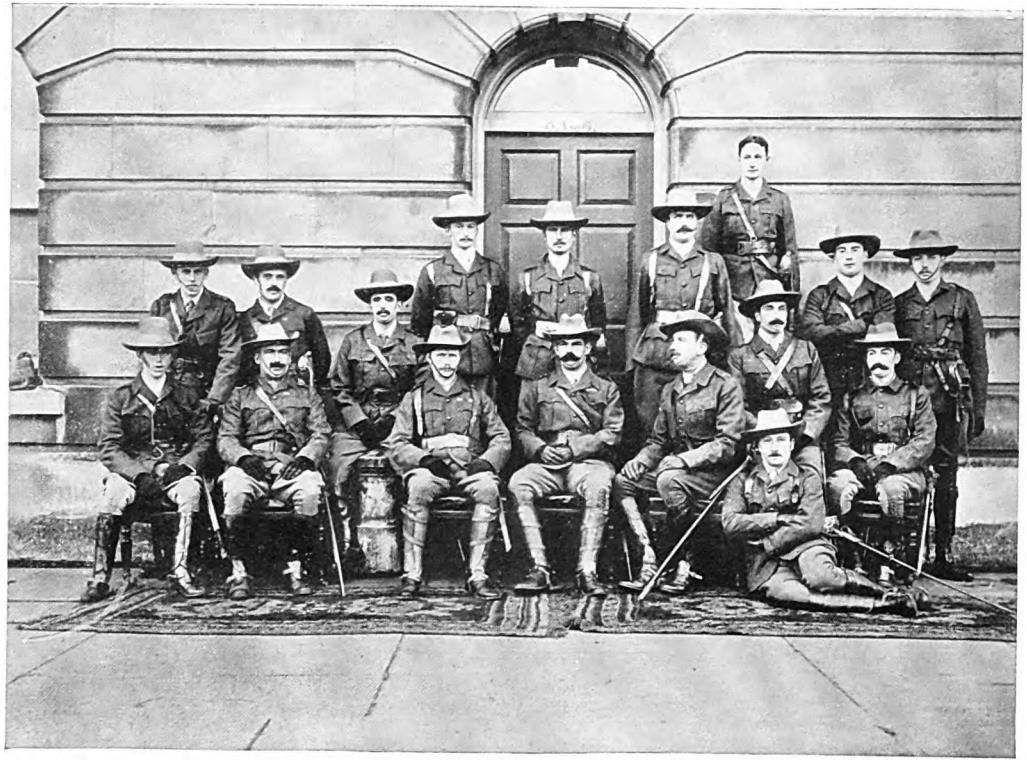

THE OFFICERS. ALDERSHOT. ON LEAVING FOR THE SOUTH AFRICAN WAR

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CHAPTER XI

The South African War, 1901–2 – Return to England, 1908

Almost immediately after arrival in South Africa, Lieut.-Colonel Dewar unfortunately became seriously ill and, a few weeks later, had to be invalided home. He was succeeded in the command by Lieut.-Colonel Fanshawe. The war had by this time become one of guerilla fighting, and Lord Kitchener was superintending the great series of 'drives' whereby the Boer resistance was gradually worn down. In conformity with the new tactics now rendered essential by the changed conditions, the Regiment equipment was entirely altered. With headquarters at Colesberg, in December 1901 the men were armed with rifles and bayonets and 150 rounds of ammunition each.

Captain Smyth, V.C., rejoined the Bays from Egypt in January 1902, when they were moved from Colesberg to Winburg in the Orange River Colony on convoy duty. After several minor skirmishes and a few casualties, they were attached to the 7th Hussars and other units to the command of Colonel R. T. Lawley, whose mobile column was engaged in rounding up all that was left of the ubiquitous General de Wet's commando. In a few weeks of this work, several hundred prisoners, several thousand cattle and vast quantities of stores were captured.

In the course of these operations, a splendid act of heroism was performed by Trooper Roberts of the Bays on February 28. Lieutenant Ing having been wounded, thrown from his horse and in imminent danger of capture, Private Roberts galloped up, under heavy fire, placed the

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officer on his own horse, and brought him safely into our lines, though pursued by a party of Boers.

In March, Lawley's column was moved up to Springs in the Transvaal, east of Johannesburg, at the head of a short branch-line that linked the town with the main-line from the Cape to Pretoria. Springs was to be the base of the column for operations against a commando, under Piet Viljoen, which was moving about in the difficult country to the eastward of the railhead. There had already been reports that the Boer General, Alberts, with the Heidelberg Commando, who had been operating in the northern part of the Orange Colony, had been driven into the Transvaal by General Rawlinson's force, and was acting with Viljoen.

On March 31, Colonel Lawley's column was at Boschmanskop, a hill about 20 miles east of the Springs railhead. That morning he received (what afterwards proved to be misleading) information that there were two small enemy forces, of about 200 men each, camped near Enkeldebosch and Steenkoolspruit farms, some 12 miles to the eastward, and that there was possibly a third party a little farther off to the south-east. This seemed to offer a good opportunity for dealing with a divided enemy in detail.

Lawley's force was made up of the Queen's Bays, the 7th Hussars, a battery of artillery and a small detachment of an irregular South African mounted force, the 'National Scouts.' He issued orders for an advance. It was to begin at 1 a.m. on April 1, by a night march of Queen's Bays to surprise the nearest Boer laager, that near Enkeldebosch. Next morning the 7th Hussars, with the battery, were to move on the Steenkoolspruit laager and the Bays from Enkeldebosch would combine with them in its capture. The Scouts would clear up the question of the presence of a third laager farther east, and if it was found, the whole force would dispose of it. On the basis of the intelligence

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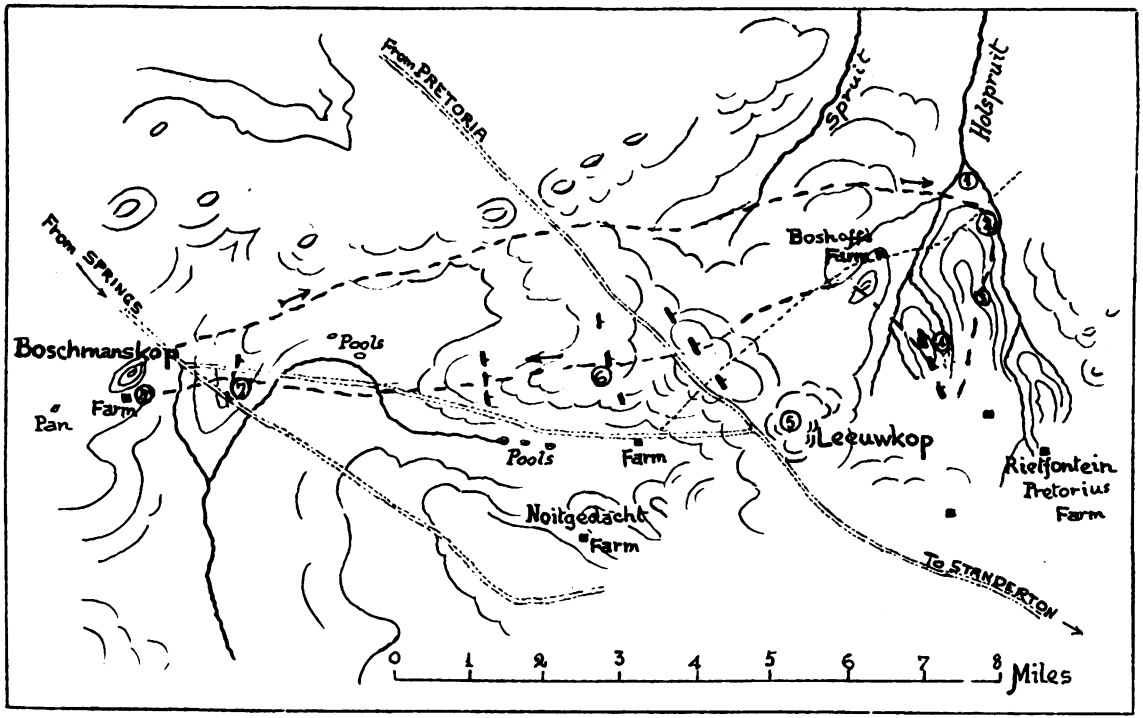

Ch. XI. (3) — The Action at Leeuwkop (April 1, 1902)

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report available on March 31, it seemed to be an operation that gave good promise of an important success.

The Bays, under Colonel Fanshawe, were detailed for the first move – the night attack. The strength of the Regiment was 284 N.C.O.'s and men, with the following officers:

A Squadron—Captain Herron, and Second Lieutenants Wilkin and Fernie.
B Squadron—Major Walker and Captain Browning.
C Squadron—Captain Ward, Lieutenant Allfrey and Second Lieutenant Hill.
Staff—Lieut.-Colonel Fanshawe (in command) Captain and Adjutant Mullens and Captain Smyth, V.C.
With the Regiment was Major Vaughan, 7th Hussars (Intelligence Officer to the Column), in command of twenty of the National Scouts.

The Bays marched from Boschmanskop at 1.30 a.m. The weather was bad. It was a very dark night, with mist and rain, and progress over the difficult and broken ground was slow.

At 3.15 a.m. a farm about a mile and a half north-east of Leeuwkop was reached and surrounded, but was found to be deserted. Vaughan with the National Scouts then went forward downhill to the crossing of a spruit in a hollow east of the abandoned farm. They found that on the other side of the stream some horses were hobbled near a laager (1).[1] Without alarming its occupants Vaughan came back, and reported to Colonel Fanshawe that he had located a Boer laager about a mile in front and that all was quiet there.

The Colonel decided to attack it. The leading squadron, B, was sent forward to surround it, while the Colonel went directly for it with the other two squadrons. The report to

[1]For this and subsequent numeral references, see the points numbered on the plan.

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Fanshawe had been that it was apparently a laager of about 300 men. At first everything went well. The Boers were completely surprised. Numbers bolted from the laager, and a lot of horses were stampeded. Here and there small parties of the enemy put up a fight, firing from their waggon line, but this only lasted a few minutes. Vaughan, who, with his Scouts, was guiding one of the flanking parties, stopped a light Cape cart which was galloping away, and took its passenger prisoner. He proved to be a noted Boer leader, Commander Pretorius,[1] a son of one of the founders of the Transvaal Republic, who gave his name to its capital, 'Pretoria.' A few other prisoners were taken.

Let us remember that the information on which the night march had been planned told of two small laagers of about 200 men each, about 12 miles eastward of Boschmanskop, and the capture of these was the object assigned to the Bays. Since the start they had covered nearly 12 miles; there was naturally an impression that the first of these laagers had been surprised and broken up. It was at a point where a small spruit joined a larger watercourse, and the laager had been formed in the fork of the two hollows. Just beyond it was a larger spruit running south to north which the South African Scouts identified with the Holspruit. One of the Boer prisoners told Colonel Fanshawe that higher up this hollow there was another laager, and this was taken to be the second 'small laager' of the Intelligence Report. Fanshawe decided to go for it.

The Regiment accordingly gave up the hunt for more prisoners on the scene of the surprise, and moved to the right up the Holspruit valley, keeping between the watercourse and western slopes of the hollow. They had not gone far when suddenly a heavy fire was opened on them

[1]Pretorius made his escape later in the night. While still a prisoner he said the Boers in front were about 600 strong, a decided underestimate.

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SURRENDER OF LOUIS BOTHA'S COMMANDO AT KRAAL STATION. 5TH JUNE 1902

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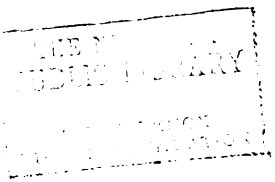

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from the front and from the other side of the spruit. The volume of fire and its rapid extension along a wide front marked by the flashes of the Mausers, showed the Bays were in close contact with a much larger force than the reports on which they acted gave reason to believe that there was any chance of meeting in this district. The order was given to retire, and the squadrons went files about, and galloped back 300 to 400 yards, and up the slopes on their left, about point (2). On the crest they dismounted and opened fire on the enemy, who were now advancing from their laager.

What was important was if possible to take up a position that might be held till daylight would make it easier to keep the superior numbers of the enemy in check till reinforcements came from Boschmanskop, or to make an ordered retirement across the difficult intervening ground. The position taken up almost at haphazard, in order to disengage the Bays after the first contact in the hollow of the spruit, was not a satisfactory one.

It was on the crest of a long height sloping towards the captured laager, and the ground rose steadily to the right, and was fairly open to a hostile advance on that flank. About a mile away in this direction the ridge rose into a bold, rocky kopje (3), and Fanshawe decided to attempt a stand there. C Squadron was therefore sent to seize the kopje, the rest of the Regiment following its movement. C Squadron reached the kopje before the Boers had made any attempt to close upon the first position. It occupied the north-east and south crests of the height, leaving its horses on the west side. As the two other squadrons came up, they prolonged the line to the north-westward.

The position to be held was not as good as had been expected. It was too extensive for the small force available for holding it, and in the rain and darkness it was anything

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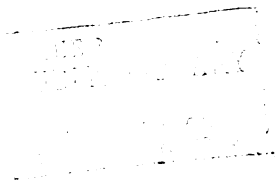

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but easy to organise its defence. C Squadron on the right, the point nearest to the Holspruit valley, had to extend to 7 or 8 yards between the dismounted files, and on the extreme right the slope of the ground facilitated close attack. The enemy had followed up our movement, and still kept up a fire from a prolonged front.

C Squadron had soon to meet a fierce attack on the right. It was already under heavy fire from the north-east (the direction of the second enemy laager). Now from the south-east a mounted Boer commando attempted to charge right up to our firing line, and the Boers shouting and firing from the saddle as they came on. In the darkness it was no easy matter to make out what was happening or to tell friend from foe, and our men at this point were a mere handful. But they behaved splendidly. Their steady and rapid fire drove back the mounted Boers more than once; but the attack was renewed, and at last, when most of the defenders had been hit, the enemy gained a footing on the extreme south-east of the kopje. There had been serious losses. The Adjutant, Captain Mullens and Major Vaughan, commanding the Scouts, had been wounded, but after receiving first-aid remained in action to the end of the whole engagement.

Dawn was now coming, and there was light enough to see that the enemy were in great force and were working round both flanks of the position. A further retirement was inevitable, and Fanshawe's idea was to get back to the dominant height of the Leeuwkop (Lion's Head or Crag), 3 miles away to the south-west, near the Pretoria-Standerton road. B Squadron was sent back to the next ridge (point 4), about a mile away in that direction, to cover the retirement; A Squadron followed; and C Squadron was the last to leave the rocky kopje (3). The squadron commander, Captain Ward, and Second Lieutenant Hill had been

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wounded, so Lieutenant Allfrey conducted the retirement, leaving 23 killed and wounded on the ground.

Captain Smyth, V.C., with 8 N.C.O.'s and men were unable to get away from the kopje. Their horses had been shot, but they were held together in a small hollow on the east side, continuing to fire for some twenty minutes, though repeatedly called upon to surrender. All but Smyth were shot down. He then lay down and managed to crawl away through long grass until some 300 yards away he caught a riderless horse, and succeeded in rejoining the Regiment.

By the time the Bays had reached the new covering position (4), some of our Scouts brought the news that Leeuwkop was already strongly held by the enemy. The Boers had followed up the retirement, extending their line to outflank the position on which the Bays had halted. The direction of the retirement was now altered, and driving off the enemy flankers on the left, the Bays moved north-west to the little kopjes near Boshof's Farm, and then westward to the rising ground, north-west of the Leeuwkop. Here a brief stand was made on the first rise of the ground north of the Pretoria road, and then there was another withdrawal to the height west of it (6) about 6½ miles from Boschmanskop.

Here the Regiment took up a long front in order to meet the outflanking tactics of the enemy, who outnumbered them four to one. Major Walker and Captain Mullens, with B Squadron, were on the right, near the Leeuwkop-Boschmanskop road, in a good position, where they held off the enemy for some time. About a mile to their left was Lieutenant Allfrey with C Squadron, and Major Vaughan with some of his Scouts. Still farther to the left was Colonel Fanshawe with A Squadron. On this side the Boers outflanked our line, and the Regiment had again to retire.

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While directing the withdrawal of his squadron on the right, Major Walker was killed.

With the squadrons halting in turn to check the pursuit, the Regiment at last came in sight of Boschmanskop, and help was at hand. In this final stage of the action Captain Herron, commanding A Squadron, was killed. The Regiment was about 2 miles from the kop when the 7th Hussars were seen riding over the ridge from the camp beyond it, and the Bays formed up once more and stopped a last rush of the enemy. Immediately after this two of our guns opened fire from Boschmanskop, and the Boers began to retire eastwards in the direction of Leeuwkop. It was then 7 a.m.

A squadron of the Hussars pursued the Boers for some distance, and a party of the Bays went out to help the wounded. Some 30 of our men had been taken prisoners during the retirement, owing to their horses being shot down. The enemy sent them into our camp next day, after having secured their arms and equipment and taken some of their clothing. This had happened lately more than once when prisoners were taken by the enemy, for the commandos were beginning to be short of sound clothes, and many Boers were wearing British khaki.

It was afterwards ascertained that the Boer force was a concentration of ten commandos under General Albrechts, and included all the Boers in the area between the S.A.C. Blockhouse line on the east and Pretoria on the west. Their numbers were estimated at 1000 by General Baden Powell. Prisoners taken later said they were 1200; Commandant Pretorius, while he was a prisoner, had said that there were 600 about Holspruit. Captain Ward said that he thought that about 800 of the enemy passed over the rocky kopje while he lay wounded there. After the fight General Albrechts told Lieutenant Ritchie, R.A.M.C., that he had 800 men with him. When peace was concluded in May, he

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THE BAYS' MEMORIAL, BUSHMAN'S KOP, SOUTH AFRICA

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surrendered with 1050 men, and he then said that in this fight he had 1200 men under his command, and that his losses were heavy and included some of his best men.

In the days before the action the Intelligence Officer at Standerton had reported that there were not quite 500 Boers in the whole district, and he had repeatedly assured Major Vaughan, the Intelligence Officer of the column, that this was the utmost number the enemy could collect for a fight. It was relying on this information that so small a force (284 men) was sent out, and after the first laager was surprised, the impression was that about half the possible Boer force had been successfully dealt with and scattered.

The lowest official estimate published of the Boer losses was 30 killed and 40 wounded. Captain Smyth (who took over the duties of Intelligence Officer to the column, as Major Vaughan was wounded) came to the conclusion that the enemy had about 75 officers and men killed or severely wounded, including Commandant Prinsloo, his brother Barend Prinsloo, Field-Cornet Nickirk and two other Field Cornets killed; and Commandants Scheepers, Farel and Viljoen, and Hans Botha's son, wounded.

The losses of the Bays were 2 officers and 13 N.C.O.'s and men killed, and 3 officers and 59 N.C.O.'s and men wounded (18 of these dangerously, 8 of whom died). There were thus 77 casualties in the small force engaged. Of the horses, 120 were killed or badly wounded. The Bays had been engaged with a force that certainly outnumbered them three to one, and at least four to one in the later stages of the fight; and the enemy were good fighters, many of them veterans of the long war, with among them veldt hunters accustomed to shooting from the saddle.

Colonel Lawley, the Column Commander, wrote to Lieut.-Colonel Dewar, who was still in hospital: 'We thought there might have been a bit of a scrap that morning, but no

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one dreamt for a moment of there being any serious fighting in store. I consider it was a very splendid performance on the part of the Bays, and I congratulate you on the exhibition your Regiment gave last Tuesday. Outnumbered nearly three to one, in most horrible ground, fighting at close quarters in the half-light with an enemy impossible to distinguish, with two out of three squadron leaders down and almost every sergeant also knocked out, it speaks volumes for their morale, tradition and discipline that they could, in the face of such great difficulties, make the splendid retirement they did.'[1]

In an official letter to Colonel Fanshawe, Colonel Lawley wrote in the same terms, and estimated the odds the Bays had to meet as 'four to one.' Lord Kitchener issued an Order to the Regiment in which he said: 'I am more than satisfied with what you have done and the gallant behaviour of officers and men under most trying circumstances.'

The last operation of the war in which the Bays took part was the 'drive' of mounted troops across the veldt on April 18–20 – a sweep on a broad front of many miles, from which, however, the Boer commandos escaped. Negotiations were already in progress, and peace was now near at hand.

Between April 8 and May 10, 1902, the Regiment marched 900 miles over difficult veldt country, suffering greatly from sickness and losing no fewer than 63 horses through eating the poisonous tulip-grass. On May 20 the Regiment arrived at Heidelberg, and on the 31st the

[1]The engagement was variously described at the time as an action at Leeuwkop, Holspruit or Boschmanskop. Some confused accounts of it were published in most of the home papers. Some of these narratives described the Bays as 'charging sword in hand,' or fighting at close quarters with the sword, oblivious of the fact that at the time no cavalry in South Africa had any swords. Our account of the fight is based on various personal records, and especially a detailed narrative drawn up immediately after by Colonel Dewar, illustrated by a sketch on which our plan of the action is based.

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Boer Prisoners captured by the Bays at Palmietfontien, 6th May 1902

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Treaty of Peace was signed at Vereeniging, after which they were employed in receiving the submission of large numbers of the Boers. In May also, Major W. Kirk (a future commander of the Regiment) rejoined from Indian headquarters.

From their arrival in South Africa to the signing of the definite Peace Treaty, the Bays' total casualties amounted to 2 officers, 7 non-commissioned officers, and 71 privates killed; 3 N.C.O.'s and 11 privates died of disease; 4 officers, 11 N.C.O.'s and 40 privates wounded. During this period the regimental wastage in horseflesh was terrible, no fewer than 748 animals out of 775 with which they opened the campaign being lost. A granite monument, 10 feet in height, was erected at Boschmanskop over the graves of Major Walker, Captain Herron and their comrades. Provision was also made, in the form of a fund, for a number of those so badly wounded as to be unable to earn a livelihood.

The Queen's Bays assuredly did not receive more battle honours than they deserved. Colonel Fanshawe was awarded his fourth 'mention' in dispatches, and Captains H. P. Sykes, P. M. Sykes, J. Ward and Quartermaster Hopkins also received honourable mention. Captains Smith and Mullins were promoted to Brevet-Majorities. Corporals C. Ginn and G. Buff were promoted Sergeants by Lord Kitchener for 'distinguished gallantry and capacity in action,' and Private Simmons was similarly honoured. Sergeant F. Webb was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal.[1] Sergeant Pope, Farrier-Quartermaster-Sergeant

[1]In the recommendation on which the Medal was awarded to Corporal Webb, of C Squadron, his gallant conduct was thus described: 'In the action of Leeuwkop, on the first kopje occupied by the Regiment, he continued firing from the eastern edge of the position, with a party of about four men, in face of a commando of Boers who were outflanking his party at about 50 yards, and who were repeatedly calling on our men to surrender. Corporal Webb, when his squadron was withdrawn, covered its retirement by continued firing, after the men round him were

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O. Preston and Private J. Roberts were mentioned in dispatches, the former for having commanded a troop in action after the wounding of his officer, the two latter for having rescued Lieutenant Hill under a heavy fire.

The Bays were ordered to Middleburg in June and to Pretoria in August, and they remained in South Africa for the rest of their service abroad, carrying off many prizes in sports, games and tournaments.

At the close of 1902, illness compelled Colonel Dewar to vacate command of the Regiment, when Colonel Fanshawe replaced him, The latter was, however, promoted Brigadier-General and given command of the 2nd Cavalry Brigade at Canterbury in April 1907. On the 1st of the month, accordingly – being, appropriately, the anniversary of the battle of Leeuwkop – Major William Kirk received command of the Regiment. He had the distinction of taking it back to England in January 1908, when the Bays relieved the 1st King's Dragoon Guards at Hounslow Barracks. In his Farewell Order to the Regiment on its quitting South Africa, his Commander-in-Chief said:

'The conduct of the 2nd Dragoon Guards (Queen's Bays) has been irreproachable in action, on trek and in camp.'

. . . . . .

From the spring of 1908 until the middle of 1914 was a particularly uneventful period in the history of the Queen's Bays. On disembarkation, the Regiment was brought under the Home Establishment, being organised in three Service Squadrons and a Reserve Squadron, as follows: 26 officers, 2 warrant officers, 52 sergeants, 8 trumpeters, and 672

all hit. After keeping the Boers in check for several minutes, he was dangerously wounded, and unable to move. Shortly after this, the Boers, finding the close range fire had ceased, streamed over the position.

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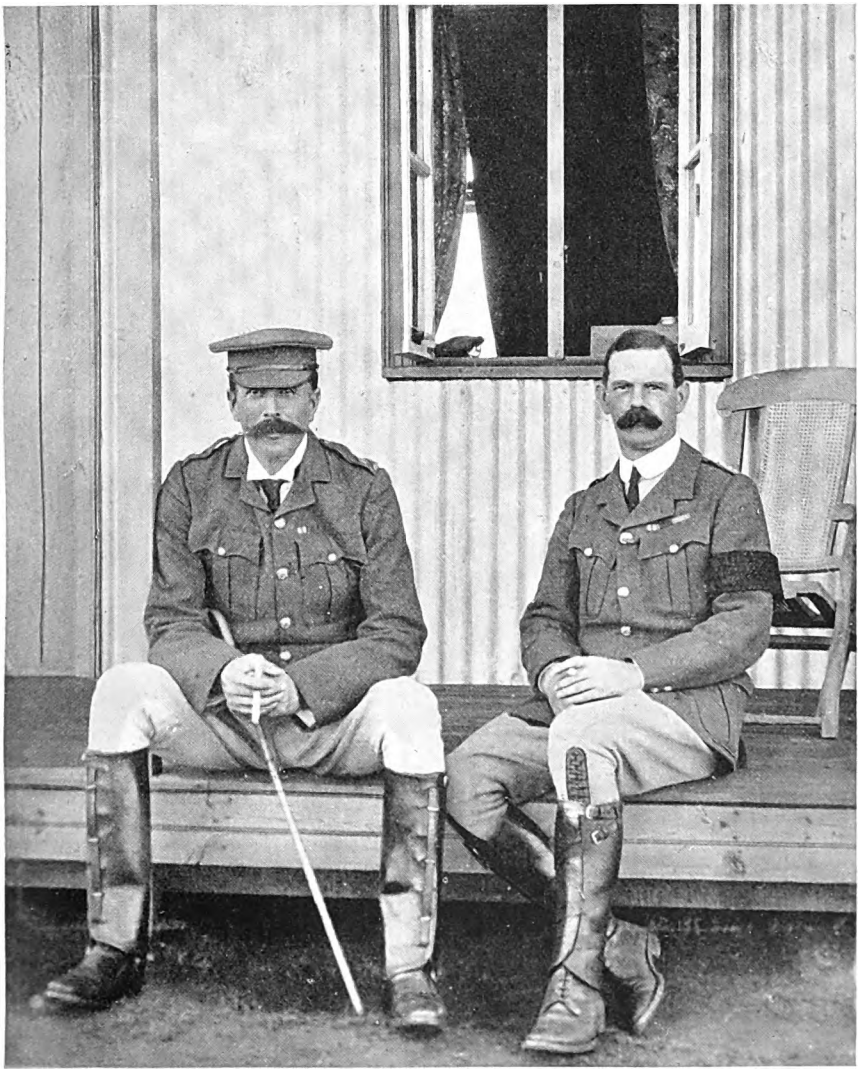

Major KIRK Lieut.-Col. DEWAR

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rank and file, with 50 chargers, 459 riding-horses and 6 draught-horses. They took over 150 horses from the 1st King's Dragoon Guards, received 10 trained horses from every cavalry regiment in England and Ireland, and having also received some 150 remounts, was, by April 1, up to its horse establishment, all of them bays.

The Bays were on street duty in London on three principal occasions in 1908–9: the visit of the French President (M. Fallières) on May 27, the visit of the King and Queen of Sweden on November 19, and the opening of Parliament by King Edward on February 16, 1909.

His Majesty graciously approved of the Regiment adopting as its motto the words *Pro Rege et Patria*, and bearing upon its standard and appointments the words 'Warburg' (for the battle of that name on July 3, 1760) and 'Willems' (for the battle of that name on May 10, 1794); also of bearing on the standard Queen Caroline's Cypher within the Garter, instead of the Royal Cypher.[1]

The Queen's Bays took part in the funeral procession of King Edward from Westminster Hall to Paddington Railway Station on May 20.

In August and September they were engaged in training and in the Army Manœuvres on Salisbury Plain, afterwards proceeding to quarters at Aldershot.

The principal incident of 1910 was an order (conveyed in War Office Letter 55/Cavalry/52), dated May 26, for an arm badge to be worn by non-commissioned officers of the Regiment, on the tunic above the chevrons, composed of the title 'Bays' in old English capitals, within a laurel-wreath surmounted by a crown in white metal. A new pouch ornament for officers was also approved under date June 21.

On April 1, 1911, Lieut.-Colonel W. Kirk having completed his term in command of the Regiment, was placed

[1]War Office Letter of November 11, 1909.

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on half-pay, and succeeded by Lieut.-Colonel H. W. Wilberforce. On June 5–8 the latter commanded a detachment of the Bays on the occasion of a semi-official visit to Aldershot by King George V. On the 5th the regimental band performed at the King's dinner in the Royal Pavilion, when His Majesty complimented the Bandmaster, Mr. J. W. Faulkner. The Bays furnished a sergeant (J. Marks) as bearer of the Royal Standard, and a sergeant and two privates as orderlies; the King conferred upon Sergeant Marks the silver medal of the Royal Victorian Order.

Under command of Lieut.-Colonel Wilberforce, the Regiment helped line the streets at the Coronation of their Majesties on June 23. On the 23rd and 29th they also lined the streets for the Royal processions to the south of the Thames and the Guildhall respectively.

In July the Bays were sent from Aldershot to London in connection with the Railway Strike, but fortunately were not called upon to act.

On the formation of the West Cavalry Depot at Seaforth, the Regiment supplied details for the personnel of the depot, in October and November. The organisation of the Bays was consequently changed to three Service Squadrons, numbering 23 officers, 2 warrant-officers, 44 sergeants (all ranks), 6 trumpeters, 621 rank and file, 45 chargers, 542 troop-horses and 14 draught-horses – the Reserve Squadron being absorbed.

On September 30, B Squadron won the Royal Cambridge Challenge Shield, fired for on Ash Ranges; A Squadron was second. This trophy had been previously won by the Bays in 1884–99, 1900 and 1901.

In August, Lieut.-Colonel R. L. Mullins, to celebrate his promotion to command of the 4th Dragoon Guards, gave a cup to the Regiment, to be known as 'The Inter-Troop Challenge Cup.' His desire was that the Commanding

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Browning Pinching Dicken

SOUTH AFRICA

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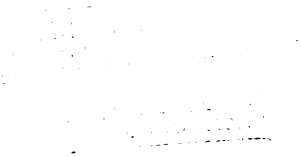

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Officer should present this trophy annually to the Regiment's most efficient troop, and the following subjects should constitute efficiency: General Efficiency at the close of Individual and Troop Training; Musketry; Skill-at-arms; Horsemanship.

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PART II

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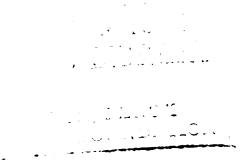

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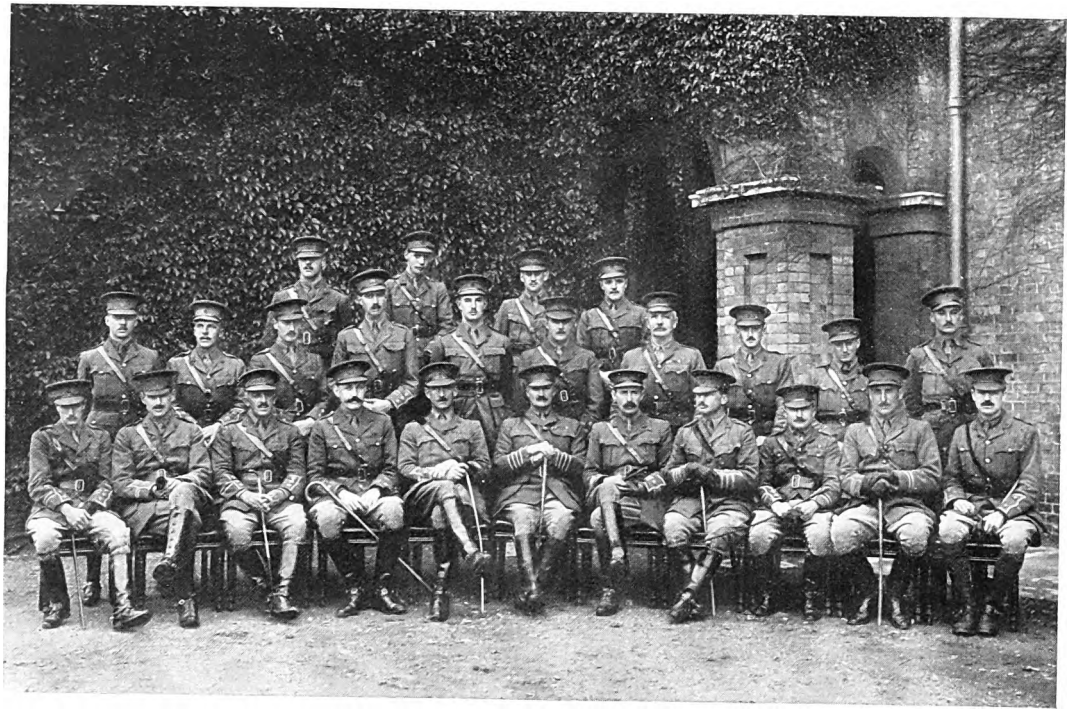

THE OFFICERS, QUEEN'S BAYS. AUGUST 1914

Lt. R. G. M. Newton Lt. G. Paul Lt. C. A. Heydeman Lt. E. Walker

Capt. J. W. L. Scott (R.A.M.C.) Lt. C. H. Bushell Lt. A. J. R. Lamb Capt. G. Le R. Burnham (Inniskilling Dragoons) 2/Lt. J. J. Kingstone Lt. F. D. R. Milne

Capt. & Q.M. R. H. Boag. 2/Lt. R. T. Barnard 2/Lt. H. V. Misa. 2/Lt. H. D. Cardew

Capt. H. W. Hall. Capt. E. S. Chance. Capt. E. Stone. Major G. H. A. Ing. Major J. A. Browning Lt.-Col. H. W. Wilberforce

Major B. Mathew Lannowe Major A. E. W. Harman Capt. G. P. O. Springfield Capt. M. C. C. Pinching Lt.-Col. Champion de Crespigny

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CHAPTER XII

August 1914 – Going to the Front

'About 6.30 p.m. on August 3, I happened to ride past Aldershot Command Headquarters, and saw a man come out and hoist three large black balls on the Headquarters flagstaff. As far as the Aldershot Command was concerned this was the official order for mobilisation.' With these words a young officer of the Bays began his personal record of the war. They are noteworthy, as showing that the Aldershot Command was taking time by the forelock. The general order for the mobilisation of our land forces was not issued till more than twenty-four hours later, and August 5 was officially the first day of the mobilisation.

It had, of course, been expected for some days. As the outlook for peace darkened in the last week of July, preliminary preparations had actually begun. A week before the order came, all leave at Aldershot had been stopped, and a lot of work was quietly done that made 'all clear' for the actual transfer to the war footing. The mobilisation was carried through smoothly and successfully – according to plan and time-table: a result most creditable to all concerned, considering it was the first time mobilisation on such a scale had been attempted in England.

The Regiment was quartered at the Willems Barracks, where, with the 5th Dragoon Guards and the 11th Hussars, it formed the 1st Cavalry Brigade, under the command of Brigadier-General C. J. Briggs, C.B. On completion of mobilisation its organisation and roll of officers was as follows:

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Headquarters

Commanding Officer	Lieut.-Colonel H. W. Wilberforce.
Second in Command	Major J. A. Browning.
Adjutant	Captain E. S. Chance.
Signalling Officer	Captain H. W. Hall.[1]
Machine-Gun Officer	Lieutenant A. J. R. Lamb.
Quartermaster	Captain H. Boag.
Medical Officer	Captain J. W. L. Scott, R.A.M.C.
Veterinary Officer	Captain W. J. Macaulay, A.V.C.

A Squadron

Officer Commanding	Captain G. P. O. Springfield.
Second in Command	Captain W. F. G. Renton (1st King's Dragoon Guards).
No. 1 Troop	Captain G. L. Burnham (6th Dragoons).
No. 2 ,,	Second Lieutenant J. J. Kingstone.
No. 3 ,,	Second Lieutenant R. T. Barnard.
No. 4 ,,	Second Lieutenant L. W. White (1st King's Dragoon Guards).

B Squadron

Officer Commanding	Major G. H. A. Ing.
Second in Command	Captain E. Stone.
No. 1 Troop	Second Lieutenant H. V. Misa.
No. 2 ,,	Lieutenant E. Walker.
No. 3 ,,	Lieutenant C. N. Champion de Crespigny.
No. 4 ,,	Second Lieutenent R. G. M. Newton.

[1]Captain Hall actually sailed on August 11 as Brigade Billeting Officer.

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AUGUST 1914

C Squadron

Officer Commanding	Major A. E. W. Harman.
Second in Command	Captain M. C. C. Pinching.
No. 1 Troop	Lieutenant C. A. Heydeman.
No. 2 „	Second Lieutenant C. H. Bushell.
No. 3 „	Second Lieutenant H. D. St. G. Cardew.
No. 4 „	Lieutenant F. D. R. Milne.
A.D.C. to G.O.C. 1st Cavalry Brigade	Lieutenant N. G. S. M'Grath.

None of the officers came from the Reserve. All were actually serving with the Regiment at the outbreak of the war, except three from other regiments, who were on leave in England from units in India. The Reservists came in rapidly, mostly in the first twenty-four hours, and formed 36 per cent. of the mobilised strength. A very useful element among them were a number of N.C.O.'s and men who had completed their colour service in 1906–8, while the Regiment was still in South Africa, and had been six or seven years in the Reserve. Though most of them had not had anything to do with horses during this time, they very soon settled down again to cavalry life, and proved a useful stiffening to the young soldiers of which the Regiment was largely composed.

Mobilisation was reported complete on Monday, August 10. Next day the King and Queen visited Aldershot, inspected the Regiment, and bade officers and all ranks farewell and the best of good fortune. That afternoon Captain H. W. Hall left Aldershot to cross over to Havre and arrange for the billeting of the Queen's Bays and remainder of the brigade in the forward concentration area. He was the first officer of the Regiment to see France.

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On the evening of Friday the 14th, the Queen's Bays marched to Farnborough Station and entrained for Southampton. The last of the troop-trains was got away by 11 p.m. Half an hour after midnight the embarkation began, the trains being run on to the quay at Southampton Docks, where a huge transport, the Atlantic liner *Minneapolis*, of 13,000 tons, awaited their arrival. Besides the Bays, the *Minneapolis* had on board L Battery, R.H.A., the Headquarters of the 1st and 2nd Divisions, with Generals Lomax and Munro, and the Headquarters Staff of the Cavalry Division and 1st Cavalry Brigade. The deck load included a large number of London taxi-cabs requisitioned for war service.

The transport did not steam out to sea till noon on the 16th, reaching the outer harbour at Havre at 5 p.m. It was a fine day, with a perfectly smooth crossing. There was a striking evidence of our command of the sea in the fact that the great liner had no accompanying escort. The transport of the Expeditionary Force to France was throughout protected by the effective watch kept upon the enemy's North Sea Fleet, and the guard that closed the Straits of Dover.

At 3 a.m. on the Sunday morning the *Minneapolis* got her anchors up and moved into one of the large docks of the port, where by 4.30 she was berthed at the quay in front of the huge *Hangars de Coton* – the Cotton Sheds – one of the largest covered spaces in Western Europe. These had been cleared for the disembarkation of the British, and there was room under their roofs for the whole of the 1st Cavalry Brigade, troops, horses and transport. The sheds were about half a mile in length. As the disembarkation began in a downpour of rain, it was fortunate that such ample shelter was available at the quayside. All the horses of the Regiment were ashore by 7.30 a.m., and men and

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horses bivouacked in the sheds. Later in the day the rain stopped, and the afternoon was fine.

A party of French officers and men assisted in the installation of the Regiment in its improvised quarters, and French Territorials were on guard at the docks. Our men, though mostly having a French vocabulary limited to a few quaintly pronounced words, began here that fraternisation with the French *poilu* that was to last to the end of the war, and somehow Frenchmen and Englishmen managed to make friends and exchange ideas despite the lack of a common language. Practical matters were, however, facilitated by a party of fifteen interpreters reporting for permanent duty with the Regiment – a very efficient lot. They were Reservists and Territorials, several of them engaged in business in Havre and Paris before the war, and possessing a good working knowledge of English. One of them (who was attached to Divisional Headquarters) had crossed with the Regiment from Southampton. He had been engaged in business in Norway, and had arrived by way of one of our eastern ports to rejoin for the war. He was the only one who seemed at the outset to be in a somewhat pessimistic frame of mind, and, loyal Frenchman though he was, expressed the opinion that French and British combined would find they would have a very serious task in tackling the German army. This was not a common view at the time, for all the reports that reached either soldiers or civilians in those first days of the war represented the enemy as having found it very difficult to deal even with the little Belgian army, and rumour was busy with stories of German defeats and the hopeless inefficiency of the enemy's leaders. It was the time of sanguine prophecies that the 'Russian steam-roller' would be flattening out Berlin and that the British and French would be across the Rhine long before Christmas.

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The stay in the *Hangars de Coton* was a brief one, the move to the front beginning on the evening of Monday the 17th. That morning orders were received for entraining at three of the dock sidings, as follows:

A Squadron at 9.30 p.m. on the 17th.
Headquarters and B Squadron at 12.15 a.m. on the 18th.
C Squadron, machine-guns and interpreters' horses at 4.15 a.m. on the 18th.

The railway journey was a long one so far as time was concerned. Though the destination of the Regiment – the frontier fortress of Maubeuge – was not quite 90 miles away to the eastward, the route was a roundabout one, and the long French military trains, mostly made up of box-waggons, travelled at a snail's pace, with many stoppages. So the move took about twenty hours. The route was up the Seine valley as far as Rouen; then by a cross line to Amiens; by Ham along the Somme to St. Quentin; and then northwards by Busigny junction to the detraining railhead at Maubeuge. The whole journey was, however, like a triumphal procession, and the men thoroughly enjoyed it. At road crossings and wayside stations there was flag-waving and cheering for England and the English. At the many stations where there were shorter or longer stoppages, crowds pressed up to the trains, offering the men flowers, tobacco, chocolate, and asking for and receiving souvenirs in the shape of regimental buttons and badges.

At Rouen the horses were fed and watered, and the men had hot coffee provided by the French troops on guard at Ham junction. From Amiens the journey lay through country that was to be the scene of war for years to come. But it looked peaceful enough, the chief sign of a state of

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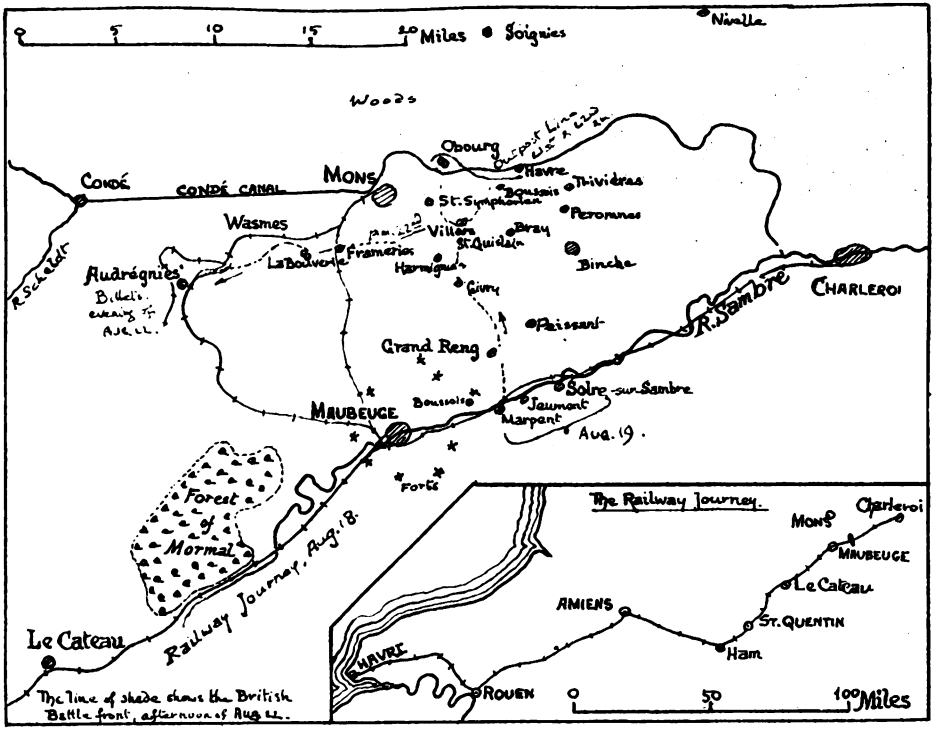

Ch. XII. (4) — The Move to the Front & Mons (August, 1914). —

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war was the presence of French Territorials guarding every bridge, tunnel and station.

At 9.30 p.m. detraining began at Maubeuge, but the last of the three trains did not arrive till near 2 a.m. on the 19th. Watering and feeding horses and unloading transport went on for some hours. Part of the Regiment bivouacked by the railhead, but at 5 a.m. squadrons began to move out to billets in villages to the eastward along the canalised river Sambre, which links Maubeuge with Charleroi. Regimental Headquarters left Maubeuge at 8.30 a.m., and two hours later were installed in the Hôtel de la Paix at Jeumont. C Squadron and the Machine-gun Section were already billeted in a large glass factory in the village. A Squadron was at Marpent; and B Squadron, which had been billeted at Boissois in the morning, was moved out farther eastward at 2.30 p.m. to Solre-sur-Sambre, to watch the roads running northwards.

The Regiment was now the farthest advanced unity of the British Expeditionary Force, of which the two Army Corps and the Cavalry Division were concentrating about Maubeuge.

It was a fine summer day, intensely hot, and the country people were busy getting in the harvest. It was a sign of the times that there were few men at work, the reapers being only women and boys, with a sprinkling of elderly men. Everywhere the people welcomed our soldiers, but in more than one diary of the time is found the remark that the villagers and countryfolk did not seem to realise the seriousness of the situation, or have any idea that the war, so near at hand across the Belgian border-line, had any perils for them.

The fact was that every one was intent on the work of the moment and had no knowledge of how events were shaping. But we may note here that on this August day, when the

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Bays settled down in their billets along the Sambre, the French armies were closing up for the great 'battle of the Frontiers'; the Belgian army was retiring on Antwerp, and that evening the capitulation was signed which put the Germans in possession of Brussels next morning.

That day the Regiment paid its first visit to Belgian ground. It was not yet an operation of war, but was described as a 'practice reconnaissance' – a useful piece of training – a move across the frontier to the little town of Binche, a halt for a while there and then a march back to billets. A Squadron acted as advanced guard; the two other squadrons provided flanking patrols to right and left. It might almost have been a day's work near Aldershot, and the only sign of a state of war was the sight of sentries – French or Belgian – at the railway crossings. On the right there was touch with a French cavalry patrol. As the point of the advanced guard reached Binche, there was a moment of excitement, not among the Bays, but on the part of a post of Belgian gendarmerie, who were holding the town. They were apparently in a rather 'jumpy' state of mind, and at first were alarmed with the idea that the approaching horsemen were a venturesome band of German cavaliers who had somehow got through the front and were taking the little garrison of Binche in the rear. Happily the situation was cleared up before the Belgians got as far as opening fire, and fraternisation followed.

There was indeed so much fraternising everywhere that the practice reconnaissance had somewhat the air of an excursion. At every village and farm the people came crowding out to cheer the *Anglais*, and brought handfuls of fruit – mostly plums and pears – chunks of bread and cheese, bottles and glasses of Belgian beer and bundles of mild cigars. French, British and Belgian flags were flying in the villages. At the halt the people eagerly helped in

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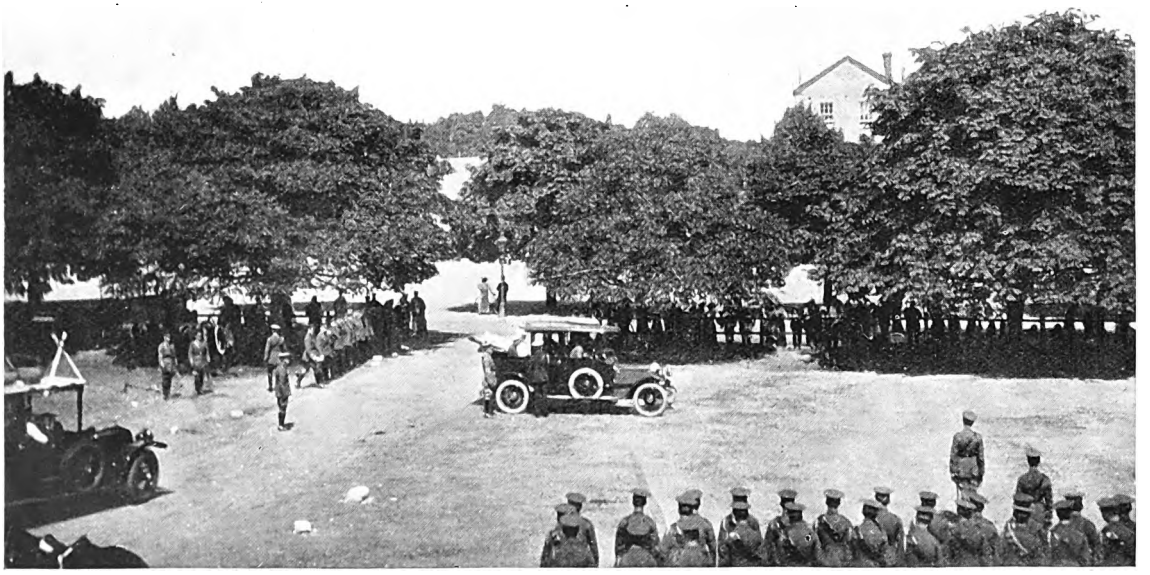

H.M. THE KING ABOUT TO INSPECT THE REGIMENT BEFORE LEAVING FOR FRANCE. ALDERSHOT, AUGUST 1914

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watering the horses. It was a holiday for the men, and it was not easy for any one to realise that the first wave of the invading flood was less than thirty miles away. There were not even any of the wild rumours that spread over a whole countryside when danger is still far distant. Every one was back in billets before 3 p.m., and there was a quiet afternoon and evening. So far campaigning seemed a pleasant experience.

But though the Franco-Belgian border still kept this peaceful aspect, that Thursday, August 20, 1914, was one of the critical days of the Great War. Not only had the enemy occupied Brussels, but the engagements which the French call 'the battle of Frontiers' had begun with the attack of the armies of the French right in Lorraine on the lines of Morhange – a hard-fought battle ending in the first defeat of the Allies. That morning General Joffre had issued his direction for the general advance, of which the push towards Morhange formed the extreme right. The two armies of the centre, now massing between the Meuse and the Moselle, were to advance into Luxembourg and the Belgian Ardennes. General Lanrézac with the Fifth Army, forming the French left, was to cross the Sambre, with Charleroi on his left, and the line would be prolonged by the British Expeditionary Force moving by Mons on Nivelles. It was to be a great linear offensive, the left moving on Namur and Brussels, to join hands with the Belgian army and sweep the invaders out of Brabant. Everything was being staked on this general advance on a front of some 200 miles.

That evening there came orders for a forward move of the cavalry next morning. The 1st Brigade was to move north to hold the crossings of the little Haisne and the Mons-Charleroi canal, to the east of the former place, and push out patrols beyond the canal line. The Bays were to

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provide the advanced guard, and there was a warning that 'small parties of the enemy' might be met with.

Friday, the 21st, was a fine day, with a hot summer haze clinging to the ground till about 9.30, after which there was bright sunshine. The Bays marched at 7.30 from Marpent, sending on A Squadron in advance. The march was by Grand Reng to the line of the highway from Beaumont to Mons, which was followed through Givry to Harmignies. Orders were to hold the crossings of the canal and the little river from Obourg to Bussoit, and A Squadron pushed on to seize these points. Just after reaching Harmignies, General Briggs sent for Colonel Wilberforce and informed him that it was reported that about 5000 of the enemy were moving on the north bank of the canal. This proved, however, to be information based on reports of civilians, and the wildest of exaggerations. Rumour was at last getting to work. Moving to the right by country roads, through the villages of St. Symphorien and Villers St. Guislain, the Bays were on the canal line shortly before noon, and proceeded to arrange for its defence. Reports were still circulating as to the presence of hostile parties of the enemy near at hand, but the patrols north of the canal line found all clear so far.

A Squadron held the left of the line, B Squadron the right, and C Squadron was in close support at the mining village of Havre on the canal line; Regimental Headquarters were for most of the day at Obourg, just north of the canal, at the foot of a high shale heap that supplied a useful look-out station. It was close country, with many headgears of mines and the accompanying shale and slag heaps, and rows of miners' cottages. There were many small enclosures of allotments, some little orchards and fairly large clumps of wood – the eastern outliers of the belt of forest that stretches north of Mons.

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Despite current rumours, the people were going about their ordinary occupations, showing the usual friendly interest in the newcomers, stopping work occasionally to watch their proceedings, and sometimes showing that they were still in a happy state of ignorance as to the realities of the time. Lieutenant Kingstone notes in his diary some incidents that show the curious mentality of some, at least, of these Belgian countryfolk. He was sent with his troop to hold a swing-bridge over the canal near Obourg. The keeper of the bridge, who had a little cottage and bit of land close up to it, was very friendly, until he met with angry protests a suggestion that a privet hedge of his garden might have to be cut down to improve the limited field of fire of the defence; and there was another outburst when he found that, without asking his permission, the Englishmen had cut through the wire fence of his chicken-run to make a pathway to a trench they were digging on the canal bank.

In the evening C Squadron Headquarters was drawn back to Villers St. Guislain. Contact with the enemy was expected next day, and news came that already, on the Friday afternoon, the 4th Dragoon Guards (2nd Brigade) had driven in a German patrol on the Soignies road north of Mons. During the night a party of A Squadron at Havre discovered that enemies were moving close in front, and fired about forty rounds at them in the dark, with what result could not be decided, but the Germans disappeared without putting up a fight. The 4th Hussars trapped three Uhlans on the right front and sent them back prisoners to A Squadron at Obourg, who passed them on to Regimental Headquarters. At dawn the Reserve Squadron saddled up, but as reports told that all was quiet in front, the men were soon dismissed for breakfast.

Early in the morning there was a glimpse of the enemy north of Obourg. Kingstone's diary tells the story:

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'Sergeant Tucker and I' (he writes) 'went out half a mile in front of the canal to see what we could see. We got off our horses and walked to the top of a little hill, and sat down with a map and field-glasses. We had not been there more than ten minutes before we saw a German squadron move slowly across our front in half-sections, not more than 400 or 500 yards off. We thought it was time to get back and warn the squadron of their proximity, but when we did reach the bridge we found everybody in a state of excitement. It turned out that the troop cook had got on his horse bare-back with two dixies, and had ridden along the side of the canal to the next troop to get some food or vegetables of some kind, and that on his way back he had been fired at by some German scouts. His horse had run away, he lost his cap and one of the dixies. I think that this at last reminded the men that it was serious soldiering and not a glorified Aldershot Field-Day. We saw no more signs of the German troop that morning, but made a tremendous attempt to check the flow of workmen, who were continuously passing to and fro across the bridge. Eventually we had to give it up as a bad job.'

Colonel Wilberforce's diary notes that during the day A and B Squadrons had a little firing, but he did not think they had 'bagged a Prussian.' Farther east a detachment of the enemy's cavalry got across the river and canal line, and had some skirmishing with Gough's 3rd Cavalry Brigade near Trivières and Péronnes (north of Binche).

At 11 a.m. heavy gunfire was heard – this probably came from the Charleroi battlefield, where Von Buelow's army was in action all day with Lanrézac and the Fifth French Army. There were rumours of an enemy force of all arms moving on Bray, about half-way between Villers St. Guislain and Binche, and C Squadron saddled up and waited for some time in readiness to move. It proved to be a false

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alarm, very likely the result of excitement among the country people at the sight of a German patrol withdrawing after contact with the 3rd Brigade farther east. In the afternoon came a warning that the Brigade would probably move to another position in the evening, and about 3 p.m. an infantry battalion of Haig's 1st Corps began to take over the outpost line near Obourg from A Squadron. As the relief of the line was completed, the Regiment concentrated at Villers St. Guislain, and orders came for a move at 7 p.m. westward to Audregnies.

During the day the British Expeditionary Force had moved up to the line on which the battle of Mons was fought on the 23rd. Haig's 1st Corps held Mons and the line to Binche. Smith-Dorrien with the 2nd Corps held the line of the Mons-Condé Canal. The only reserve Sir John French had at his disposal was Allenby's Cavalry Division. On his right along the Sambre about Charleroi was the Fifth French Army (Lanrézac). Sir John (having not even a warning that things were going badly there) naturally presumed that this flank was fairly secure, but he was anxious about his left. On this side the British Expeditionary Force formed the extreme left of the long allied battle-line, and west of Condé there were only French Territorial forces assembling about Tournay and Lille, the nearest of them many miles away. He therefore moved the greater part of Allenby's Cavalry Division on the evening of the 22nd to billets in rear of his left, leaving only Chetwode's 5th Cavalry Brigade on the extreme right with Haig. This was the move in which the Bays took part that evening.[1]

[1]The orders from the G.O.C. Cavalry Division were that after the Brigades were relieved by infantry, the Cavalry Division (less 5th Brigade on the right flank) was to march under cover of darkness to concentrate about Audregnies and protect the left flank of the B.E.F.

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The move from Villers St. Guislain began at 7 p.m. It was a march of nearly 20 miles. Darkness soon came on, and the march seemed to be through endless streets of little houses, with here and there the headgear of mine-shafts, and now and then the glare of tall blast furnaces. For almost immediately after the start the march was through the labyrinth of mining villages, collieries and ironworks of the Borinage coalfield south and south-west of Mons. Work was over for the day, and all along the line of march the people crowded out to see the long column of British cavalry and horse artillery moving westward. They cheered the troops, pressed up to them, grasped their hands, gave them little gifts of chocolate, cigars and packets of cigarettes. The night march was like a triumphal procession. No one had yet heard that already defeat had come at Charleroi, or could imagine that within less than thirty hours the war storm would be sweeping over these rejoicing villages.

Through Frameries, La Bouverie and Wasmes the march went on till, after midnight, the Regiment halted at its destination, the village of Audregnies. It was not till near 2 a.m. on the Sunday that every one had settled down in billets. The horses were picketed in a large field. The men found shelter in the houses and sheds of the village. The officers were billeted in the local convent school. Its girl pupils were all away on their summer vacation, and the Curé of Audregnies and the nuns had made elaborate preparations for the reception of their English guests. A large refectory hall had been improvised into a supper-room and dormitory. Down the middle of it, at a long table, supper was served by the nuns, the menu including wines, hot coffee and abundance of omelettes. On each side of the table there was a range of beds, with, beside each, a strip of carpet and a little washstand.

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'It was amusing,' writes an officer in his diary, 'to see all the officers of the Regiment, from the Colonel downwards, going to bed like a lot of little boys at school.'

Under those ideally peaceful conditions they slept soundly through the night before the battle of Mons.

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CHAPTER XIII

Mons and the Retreat – Le Cateau

The morning of Sunday, August 23, began with mist and rain limiting the view to the front and making aerial reconnaissance hopeless. But by 10 a.m. there was a change to a bright, warm summer day. At an early hour the church bells of Audregnies and of the villages around were ringing, and the people were making their way to Mass. An early train brought some excursionists into Mons. It was all strangely unlike one's idea of the morning of a great battle. The fact was that these Belgian miners, iron-workers and farmers of the border country were firmly convinced that the khaki-clad British troops, whom they had so enthusiastically welcomed, were passing visitors, who would soon move forward to fight their battles farther north and clear the country of the invaders.

For the Bays at Audregnies it was, throughout most of the day, and indeed until far into the evening, a restful time. They were a good 5 miles behind the line held by the 2nd Army Corps along the Condé Canal. The officers still enjoyed the hospitality of the convent, the nuns beginning the day by serving a breakfast of coffee, rolls and butter, eggs and jam – the first of three good meals they provided. All through the morning and the afternoon the men had something like a holiday. Arms and equipment were cleaned up and some washing of clothes was accomplished. Supplies were abundant, and there was plenty of time for meals. It was a piece of good luck that the Regiment had this day of rest as a preparation for the arduous time that followed.

Shortly after 10 a.m. the sound of gunfire came from

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the northwards, and rose gradually in intensity, till by noon a heavy cannonade extended for miles along the front. But no call came to the Regiment (the 1st Cavalry Brigade being in cavalry reserve). Rumours from the front told that things were going well, and the townsfolk of Audregnies hardly showed any signs of excitement at being so near a big battle. Probably the matter-of-fact fashion in which the English dragoons went through the routine of a restful day encouraged their quiet attitude. Perhaps there was a touch of heredity in their impassive optimism, for though the borderland of Flanders and Brabant had enjoyed nearly a hundred years of peace, it had been for centuries the cock-pit of Europe. The forefathers of these countryfolk had regarded the march of armies as a frequent incident in their lives, and this very ground had often been the scene of war. To name only a few of its more famous battles, Waterloo, Ligny and Steenkerk and Ramillies were only a few miles away to the northward. Fontenoy was near at hand to the westward, and Malplaquet lay south of Mons. Jemappes was a mining village among the slag-heaps of the coal-field immediately east of Audregnies. For more than a hundred years Mons and Maubeuge had been rival fortresses of the Franco-Belgian border, and both had seen many a siege.

The chance of war had once more brought battle to Mons, now an open town, but offering a good position for a defensive battle, with the waterline of its canal making a well-marked line to hold, with a fairly open field of fire to the front. South of this line lay the mass of villages, mine-heads, light railway embankments and enclosures of the Borinage coal-field; but on the right, about Binche and on the left, west of Audregnies, there were stretches of open country, partly made up of corn lands, with wire fences. North of the position there was a belt of woodland running

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roughly parallel to its front – cover that masked the enemy's advance that morning.

When Sir John French decided to offer battle on this Mons position, the information provided by the French General Headquarters was such as to give every prospect of a successful stand. He was told that the German force advancing against him was at most only two Army Corps, and he had not even a word of warning that Lanrézac's defence on his right about Charleroi was already collapsing. The battle was fought by the British Command under the impression that Joffre's plans for the allied advance still held good. It would be a defensive engagement that would be the prelude to an offensive on a grand scale.

On this first day of battle our little army held its own. On the left, along the line of the Mons-Condé Canal, held by Smith-Dorrien and the 2nd Corps, every German attack ended in failure.[1] On the right, towards Binche, till late in the day the flank was slightly withdrawn, and the city of Mons itself, forming a sharp salient in the line, was evacuated, and a position taken up immediately to the south of it. But when darkness ended the fight, the position generally was sound, and our men were in high spirits at having repeatedly repulsed the attacks of the enemy.

But just after 5 p.m. Sir John French had received a belated telegram from Joffre's headquarters at Vitry le François, informing him that on his right the enemy were across the Sambre and Lanrézac's army had begun its retreat, and that the force opposed to the British had been underestimated in earlier reports. Instead of only at most two Army Corps, Von Kluck had at least four opposed to the British Expeditionary Force, of which one, with a

[1]After dark that Sunday evening a German officer, whose regiment was engaged on this side, wrote in his diary that he felt it a sad experience that his first day of battle had been a day of defeat.

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Cavalry Division, was working round its left. In other words the British were heavily outnumbered and both flanks of their position were being turned. For some time Sir John had suspected that the enemy's force had been underrated. The German artillery fire had seemed much heavier than the batteries of only two corps could have supplied.

It was obvious that there was no other course but a retirement conforming to that of Lanrézac. It could not, however, be begun for some hours. In view of the misleading information received earlier, the battle had been fought with the impression that it would be followed by an advance, and all the supply and ammunition trains of the Expeditionary Force were close up, blocking the roads by which the withdrawal must begin. Orders were quickly issued for their withdrawal to begin, and the defence of the position was continued until the German attacks ceased at dusk. It was hoped that the withdrawal would be for only a few miles in order to make a new stand on a position already reconnoitred. This new line lay east to west along the rise of ground between the little streams of the Rhonelle and the Honelle, which join the Scheldt at Valenciennes and Condé. In places, high-standing crops and buildings limited the field of fire, but it had good artillery positions. Its right would rest on the forts of Maubeuge, and its left would be near the village of Jenlain – a front of about 12 miles. As the enemy was in close contact, the withdrawal would have to be covered by a series of rear-guard actions. Reinforcements would be soon available. The 4th Division under General Snow was arriving from England and being moved by train to Le Cateau, and a new Brigade, the 19th, had been formed by collecting four battalions originally destined for line of communication troops during the projected advance into Belgium. The first moves would be made after dark.

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The first orders to move reached the Bays at Audregnies at 10 p.m. on the Sunday evening, when some of the officers and men were already turning in for the night. They were not to have much rest for some time to come. The Regiment saddled up and marched off at 11 p.m. for Quiévrain station, 4 miles to the westward. Matters not having gone too well with the left of Smith-Dorrien's Corps during the day, the 1st Cavalry Brigade were suddenly called out to hold this stretch of the railway line, digging themselves in. Patrols watched all crossings of the canal immediately in front, but no Germans were across before dawn. The rest of the Cavalry Division was in rear of the 1st Brigade.

The portion of the line assigned to the Bays had a front of about 1000 yards, running westward from Quievrain railway station along the brink of a railway cutting of no considerable depth. It was on the railway from Valenciennes to Mons, where the line ran through a low ridge overlooking a wide stretch of flats. When dawn came it was seen that it commanded a splendid field of fire. It looked out over a dead level, where the Rhonelle ran into the Scheldt. As far as the river and on both sides of its tributary brook the land was reclaimed marsh ground, with osier beds, pasture and patches of tillage, and a network of wide, open drains.

When the troops reached the position about midnight they found that some hundreds of miners and peasants had been collected to assist them in digging a trench-line along the bank of the cutting. The countryfolk had brought so many lanterns that it was jestingly suggested that the show was like a torchlight tattoo at the White City, and hopes were expressed that it would not attract the attention of the enemy gunners on the other side of the Condé Canal. It was a dark night, and in the distance, here and there, the red glare of burning villages told of the ruin wrought by shell-fire during the day. But no firing disturbed the workers,

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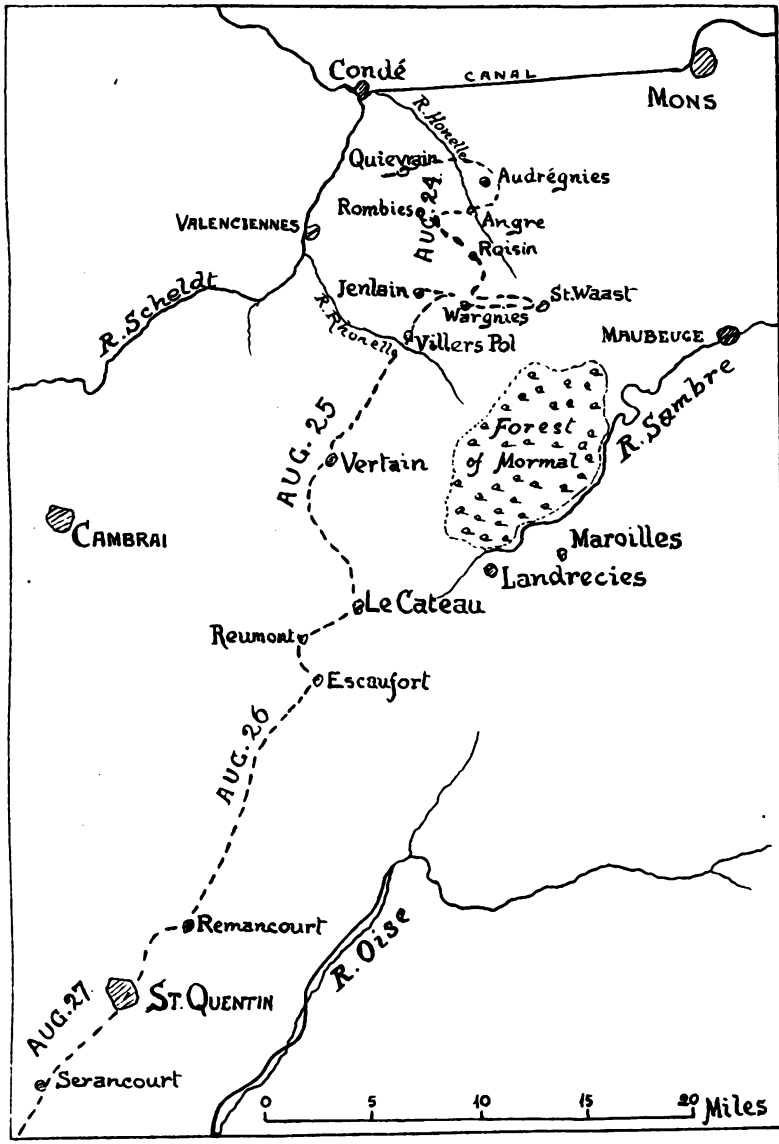

Ch XIII. 5 —The Retreat—Mons to St. Quentin—

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military and civilian, at the railway cutting. The tools available were the small supply of picks and shovels of the Pioneer equipment on the waggons, supplemented by borrowed long-handled Belgian spades, quite unsuited for the work, so when daylight came the trench was still a shallow one, giving scant cover. No one had any sleep, except perhaps some of the machine-gunners, who had been left with their guns and limbers in the little square before the railway station. They lay down on the cobble-stones, and cold as the night was, snatched a little sleep. At dawn the machine-guns were brought into the trench-line. Some of the men were employed in putting houses near it in a state of defence. The civilian workers were withdrawn.

As the light increased, heavy firing began away to the right front. There was no sign of an enemy advance on the left flank, and no artillery fire against the railway position. But soon after dawn a dense mass of Germans, with bands playing, Staff riding ahead, were seen advancing to the railway line about 1 mile to the extreme right of the 1st Cavalry Brigade, escorted in front and flanks by our cavalry patrols, more like a London demonstration conducted by police. The 5th Dragoon Guards opened on them with machine-gun and rifle fire, but no notice was taken. The withdrawal from the canal had begun, Smith-Dorrien and the 2nd Corps falling back to make a stand in the line of mining villages from about Frameries to near Quarouble, on the left rear of the covering front temporarily held by the cavalry; while Haig and the 1st Corps on the right were moving back towards the Maubeuge-Jenlain position. At 7.30 the cavalry were drawn back from the railway to protect Smith-Dorrien's flank on his new line.

For the Bays that morning the 'fog of war' barred any idea of what was the purpose or meaning of the orders and counter-orders that kept them moving hither and thither

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over the cobbled roads for some hours to come. In officers' diaries of the day one finds the impression they had of what was happening. The *Official History of the War* tells how the Cavalry Division successfully protected the left of the retirement, supported by the 19th Infantry Brigade, but of the 1st Cavalry Brigade one hears hardly a word after the statement that early in the day it was on the railway line, and later took part in the general withdrawal southwards. The diaries referred to tell how, during the morning, the Bays never had an opportunity of actual fighting contact with the enemy, but were continually on the move, now east to west, then west to east, and at one time it seemed moving round a circle not far from Audregnies.[1] Moving east of the village, with alternate halts and retirements, the Regiment fell back through Baisieux to Angre, and then for a while moved west towards Rombies.

There was heavy firing to the right and there were reports of a German advance on the left. To check this advance the 2nd Cavalry Brigade charged, suffering heavy loss. Some riderless horses of the 9th Lancers came galloping back through the Bays. Continuing the retirement, the Regiment, shortly after noon, joined the main body of the Cavalry Division, which was concentrated on a plateau covered with corn-fields just reaped, with the wheat standing in stooks. During this move the Bays came under shrapnel fire, but there were no casualties. During the afternoon the

[1]We are here giving the impressions of the Regiment in the first stage of the retreat as part of the picture of the time. Only the Staff and Commanding Officers had any clear idea of the situation. On this morning of the 24th, the 1st Cavalry Brigade received orders that the Cavalry Division, with the 15th Infantry Brigade, were to concentrate at a village about 6 miles west of Audregnies to protect the left flank of the 2nd Corps. The 1st Brigade retired about 7.30 a.m., Major Harman's squadron of the Bays doing rear-guard. About 11 a.m., General Fergusson, commanding the 5th Division, appealed to Allenby for support, as his left flank was threatened – hence the counter-march to near Audregnies.

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retirement continued, with frequent halts, through Roisin and across the French frontier to Wargnies. During the march they came now and then upon lines of transport moving south, bodies of infantry tramping stolidly along but looking dead tired, and the sad sight of crowds of fugitives abandoning their homes and mingling with the retirement of the army.

It was after dark when there was at last a halt at the hamlet of La Boiserette near Wargnies. The Bays off-saddled and were preparing to bivouac, when orders came to move east to St. Waast for outpost duty. Just before reaching the village there was a counter-order. Infantry were to hold the outposts. So the Regiment settled down for the night in a field near St. Waast. Since the evening before, touch had been lost with transport and supply, and the men had drawn no rations and had only eaten during the day some fruit and other odds and ends from farms and villages. Emergency rations were opened, and then officers and men lay down beside their horses about midnight for three or four hours of rest. It was a wretched bivouac. After an intensely hot day, rain was falling, and stray horses came wandering into the lines and stumbling about. But the tired men slept through it all, and as the light came, and with it finer weather, prepared for another day of rear-guard work.

The troops were on the line of the Maubeuge-Jenlain position, but with the French retirement continuing on the right and large enemy forces working to outflank the left, it had been decided that the retreat must continue during the 25th. In rear of the line lay the Forest of Mormal – woodlands of beech and oak with thick undergrowth, and from north to south only a few narrow paths. The British force was therefore divided, the 1st Corps retiring on the east side of the woods, and the 2nd Corps, covered by the

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Cavalry Division, marching west of the forest, with its general direction on the town of Le Cateau, near which the 4th Division was in position.

The Regiment was on the move at 4 a.m., and occupied a rear-guard position between Wargnies and Jenlain, to cover the retirement of the infantry. German patrols were seen out in front, but before there was any contact the order came to retire, and the Regiment fell back to Villers Pol, south of Jenlain. Here the Bays remained for a great part of the day, A Squadron holding the village on the right, C Squadron with Headquarters and the Machine-gun Section in the centre of the line, and B Squadron on the left. Infantry were retiring on the right, and away to the left other units of the Cavalry Division were in touch with the enemy; but there were few Germans in the immediate front of the Bays. There was intermittent shell-fire and occasional contact with Uhlan patrols. At 11 a.m. A Squadron nearly trapped one of these patrols in the village. The trap was laid and the Uhlans were just about to ride into the place when one of our men unfortunately fired a shot and gave everything away. The Uhlans turned and galloped off, some of them throwing away their heavy steel lances. The only capture was a wounded man, brought down by the fire that followed the flight of the patrol.

In the afternoon there was a steady retirement southwards towards Vertain and Le Cateau, the 1st Brigade and the remnant of the 2nd covering the retiring infantry and being often in close touch with them. There were frequent halts to enable them to gain ground. Many of them looked dead beat. Transport was mingled with the retreating infantry, and in places by the roadside there were dumps of abandoned stores left to lighten the waggons, some of them on fire. From one of these dumps the Machine-gun Section was able to load some useful supplies on its limbers. More

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than once the Regiment came under heavy shell-fire, but luckily escaped many casualties. The only food that officers and men had had during the day was ration biscuits and a little bread and marmalade and some water.

It was late in the afternoon when the Regiment halted for a while to cover the retirement through Vertain village. There was an alarm that the enemy's cavalry were closing in on the flank, and two squadrons, A and B, were for a while pushed out westwards, and had the encouraging sight of a British battery coming into action and driving off a body of German infantry. There was as yet no contact with the Germans, but the enemy's gunners occasionally sent shrapnel bursting over the line of retreat. In Vertain there was some confusion – troops, transport and fugitives mingling together. It was after dark when the regiments at last fell back from the village. The retreating columns were here diverging, some upon Caudry, others towards Le Cateau. The Bays protected the movement towards the latter place. The road leading into Le Cateau from the north follows a sharp descent, and near the town the rising ground on both sides converts it into a defile. Here and in the streets beyond there was what looked at times like hopeless confusion. Guns, transport, troops moving slowly side by side mingled at last in a dense mass that again and again blocked the march. Many of the exhausted troops lay down in the side streets of the little town. One troop of the Bays failed to get through, passed the night in Le Cateau and rejoined next morning. It was long after midnight when at last the Regiment got clear of the place. At 1.30 a.m. on Wednesday, the 26th, officers and men bivouacked in a field a little to the south of it, sleeping beside their horses.

August 26 was the critical day of the retreat, when disaster was narrowly averted. It had been intended that

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the right and left columns of the British force, after their retreat during the 25th east and west of the Forest of Mormal, should regain touch to the south of it. But Haig and the 1st Corps after a trying march had had to fight a night battle, and beat off German attacks at Landrécies and Moreilles after nightfall on the 25th. Their left was some miles from the right of Smith-Dorrien's force, and Sir John French decided that the two columns must continue the retirement on the 26th, joining hands farther south later on. The orders to Smith-Dorrien were that with the 2nd Corps, Snow's 4th Division and the Cavalry Division he was to march as early as possible that morning, retiring on St. Quentin.

Smith-Dorrien had issued orders accordingly. It was not until after midnight that he realised that they would have to be seriously modified. Reports which were reaching him told how detachments of all arms were still straggling into the line, all tired out, many nearly dead beat. At 2 a.m. Allenby, the G.O.C. of the Cavalry Division, arrived at the Corps Headquarters in Bertry village. He reported that the enemy held the ridges to the northwards, which were essential for protecting a continued retreat. His own cavalry were not yet concentrated and were in an exhausted condition after the heavy work and almost sleepless nights since, at Mons; and he gave it as his opinion that, if the retreat was to continue without risking another battle, the only chance would be to resume the march under the cover of darkness. Hamilton, the nearest of the divisional commanders, was called in, and it was agreed that it was impossible to move before daylight. Smith-Dorrien then decided that he must make a stand on the Le Cateau position, in the hope of putting up for a while such a good fight that the enemy's pursuit would be checked. He sent his decision off by motor-car to French's General Head-

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quarters at St. Quentin, and soon after got into telephonic touch with the Commander-in-Chief. It took some time to convince Sir John that a stand must be made. Smith-Dorrien was told that he was risking a Sedan. He replied that the risk must be taken. The men must have a brief rest, fight at dawn, and break off the battle before the enemy could engage all his forces. At last French gave a reluctant consent.

In the short time that remained before the early summer dawn, orders were issued to make a stand on the low ridges, south of the Cambrai–Le Cateau road, on which the troops had bivouacked – a front of about 7 miles. Belated detachments were still coming in, and it was not an easy matter to arrange the battle-line. The only maps available were French maps without contours, and a heavy mist rising as the dawn came, made it difficult to judge the lie of the ground, and made aerial reconnaissance of the enemy's positions impossible. The 5th Division was to hold the right, the 3rd the centre and the 4th the left. The Cavalry Division was to concentrate south of Le Cateau and guard the right flank. Cambrai was reported to be held by a scratch force of French Territorials and Reserve formations, but between it and the British left there was a 5-mile gap. Sordet's French Cavalry Corps, which had made a long march the day before, was, however, now to move from east to west in rear of the Le Cateau position, and was to endeavour to protect its left flank.

The Bays left their bivouac near Le Cateau at 4 a.m., riding first towards Reumont through the dense summer haze. No supplies for men and horses had been received since the evening of the 23rd. The men had lived in haphazard fashion on what they picked up in the villages, and the emergency rations had all been used up. It was important to get some supplies, and there was a hopeful report

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that they would be found where some of the supply trains had halted on the right rear of the line.

At Reumont was the headquarters of the Cavalry Division, and here the Regiment joined the rest of the 1st Cavalry Brigade, and at last got touch with the transport. There was a hurried distribution of supplies. At 5.30 there were orders to move through Honnechy and take up a position in and around the village of Escaufort, on rising ground with a good view towards Le Cateau. Near Honnechy some more supplies were picked up from an abandoned dump by the roadside. By the time Escaufort was reached the enemy's artillery was opening fire. The Germans had seized Le Cateau soon after dawn as the last of our men were withdrawing from it. A Squadron occupied the east end of Escaufort; B, with the Maxim guns, was on the forward slope in front of its west end; C was in support behind the village. The place was put in a state of defence and trenches dug in front of it. The 11th Hussars were near at hand to the right in St. Souplet, and Gough's 3rd Brigade was out in front, echeloned to the right.

By 8 a.m. the last of the haze had cleared, the sun was well up and it was a bright summer day of intense heat. By this time the enemy had brought the powerful artillery of three Army Corps into action, and his infantry were making a series of attacks, at first in mass formation, all along the line. For some hours these attacks were repulsed or held. The British gunners were doing splendid work. On the right from Escaufort the Bays could see attacking masses driven back by our artillery-fire alone as they came over the ridges near Le Cateau or tried to push up the valley of the Selle.

It was perhaps fortunate that, as Von Kluck's account of the fight indicates, he had been unable to reconnoitre the position, and was mistaken for some time as to its frontage,

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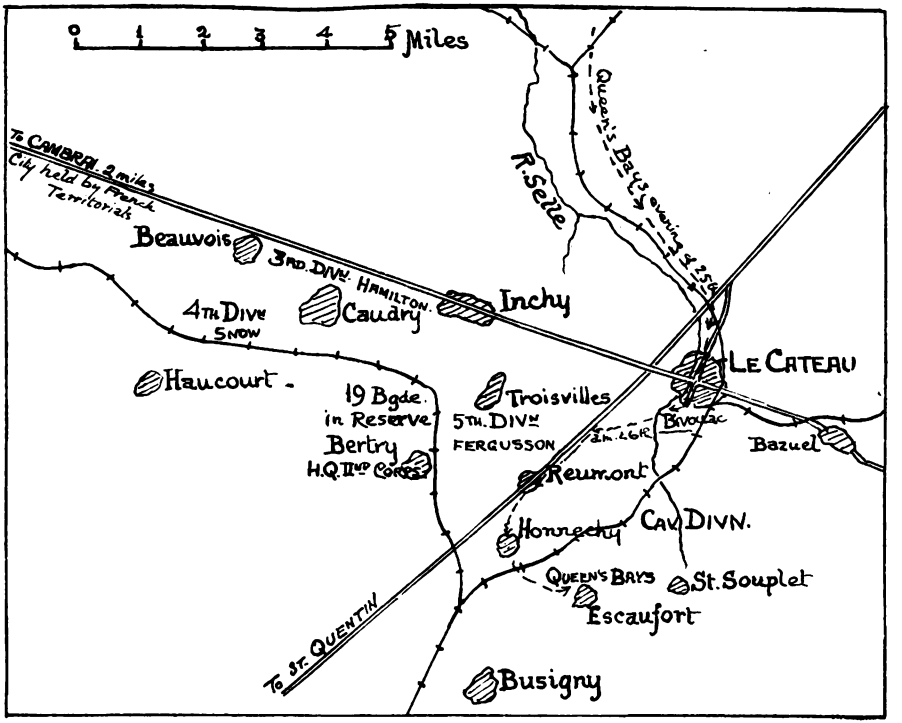

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Le Cateau. Aug. 26. 1914.

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and to the last had the false impression that it was a rear-guard battle, fought to cover a line of retreat to the westward. Unaware that the 2nd Corps had been reinforced, he did not realise that there was a huge open gap on its right flank, and he actually reported that he had been in action with the whole of our Expeditionary Force – a fair proof that he was seriously impressed by the splendid vigour and obstinacy of the defence.

The Cavalry Division was never closely engaged. Only its attached Royal Horse Artillery batteries and some of its machine-guns shared in the actual fighting. At first, from their high ground about Escaufort, the Bays were largely spectators of the battle on the right. As the day went on they came under heavy shell-fire, but luckily had hardly any casualties. The shells never actually found their shallow trenches in front of the village. At first they had the sight of the failure of the earlier German attacks against our right. As the day went on they saw something of the self-sacrifice of our gunners, keeping their batteries in action on exposed slopes against a superior artillery force. One battery in their front was silenced, gun after gun being put out of action by the storm of bursting shells. Without underrating the fine defence made by our infantry, it may be said that the gunners bore the brunt of the day. The enemy at the close of the battle found more than thirty disabled guns to be patched up and sent to Berlin as trophies, but no battery was rushed, and every captured gun had been so smashed up that it was lost simply because it had to be left where the wreck of its mounting stood.

By 2 p.m. the hostile pressure all along the front was intense, and on the right the 5th Division was nearing the end of its endurance. It was under a storm of shell-fire not only from the front but from the flank, and the enemy was obviously gaining ground. The time was coming to break

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off the battle, and shortly after 3 p.m. Smith-Dorrien issued orders for a general retirement. These did not reach the units engaged for some time, and in some cases failed to get through. The first the Bays heard of them seems to have been not long after 3 p.m., when Lieutenant Bushell was sent by the G.O.C. of the 1st Cavalry Brigade with an order to the 11th Hussars, who had moved forward on the right, to fall back. As he rode past Escaufort in rear of the village, he told officers he met there that they would soon have orders for a retirement by Busigny. He delivered his message to the Hussars and seems then to have ridden forward to some of them who were reconnoitring to the front. He did not rejoin the Bays, being cut off by the advance of some enemy detachments. He was reported missing, but many weeks after reached England in safety, after an adventurous time of wanderings in northern France and in Flanders, again and again escaping capture by a hairbreadth.[1]

As the retirement began and the right of the line fell back, the cavalry were ordered to conform to the movement and protect it. The Bays had to detail a couple of troops to manhandle through Escaufort a gun of their attached Royal Horse Artillery unit – L Battery – the carriage of which had been damaged by a direct hit. The Bays remained till near 5 p.m. on or near the ground they had held all day, while infantry and guns from the right came pouring past them, moving south-westwards towards St. Quentin. The whole line was gradually joining in the retreat. But there was proof that the enemy had been very hard hit in the fact that the Germans attempted no close pursuit. They were, it may be, almost as march-weary as our own men. At several points on the front they allowed themselves to be still held up by a few battalions and smaller detachments

[1]For the detailed personal narrative of his adventures see Appendix.

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which the order for the retreat had not reached, and who still held their ground. Von Kluck's illusion that the British line of communication and retreat lay nearly due west led him to develop a turning advance on the British left, and here at last Sordet's Cavalry Corps, after a long flank march, was coming up in the nick of time. Soon after 4 p.m. the sharp reports of his 'seventy-fives' were heard, and told that he was holding the German advance.[1]

The sky had clouded over, and twilight and darkness came early, with a steady downpour of rain later on, making the night pitch dark. Through rain and darkness the troops were moving slowly south, units here keeping some order, there mingled together. Guns, transport and fugitives from the villages plodding on foot or with their country carts packed the St. Quentin road, their slow progress continually interrupted by halts and checks. The Bays for some hours marched on a roughly parallel line with the road, making their way over the fields and finding it at times difficult to keep direction, for all view extended only a few yards, maps were useless, and with most of the farmers and villagers in flight it was not easy to find any one who could give local information. As the night went on, Colonel Wilberforce found he had only about half the Regiment with him – A Squadron and two troops of B Squadron. Horses and men were tired nearly to breaking-down point. Two villages where an attempt was made to find some shelter for the

[1]In dealing with Le Cateau in his dispatch, Sir John French not only showed that he was unaware of Sordet's timely help, but actually represented the French general as having refused to co-operate on the ground that his horses were exhausted after their long march from the Sambre valley. This was not the only good service the French did to their British Allies that day. Von Kluck had directed his 2nd Corps to move by Cambrai to turn the British flank. The city was held by D'Amade's Territorials and Reservist Brigades, and these kept the German 2nd Corps occupied all day, though eventually they lost the city, but only after a good fight that began on a position to the north of it, and only ended as they retired through its streets, after putting up a second fight in its suburbs.

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night were already packed with troops and fugitives. More and more slowly the retreat was continued, till at last, after a weary march of six hours, he was able to halt his diminished command at the village of Ramicourt, 15 miles from the battlefield. Here, after 11 p.m., rough billets were found in houses, barns and sheds, and officers and men got about two hours' sleep (making a total of about seven hours of rest since the evening of the 22nd).

C Squadron, after losing touch in the darkness and confusion, was bivouacking in the rain not far from the village. Major Ing with part of B Squadron and Lieutenant Lamb with the Machine-gun Section (minus its limbered waggons, which had disappeared early in the evening) had lost touch soon after Escaufort was evacuated. In the darkness, working across open country, this detachment had passed the Regiment on the way and had reached St. Quentin about 10.30 p.m. The latter part of the march was by the high road, with motor transport immediately in front, halting every few hundred yards and then making another short move. 'By the time we reached St. Quentin,' writes Lieutenant Lamb, 'most of us were asleep on our horses. I, personally, hardly knew we were in a town at all, being fast asleep on my horse. Ing, who was commanding us, had decided to go there, knowing it was roughly in the line of retirement. We went to the barracks there, and fastened up our horses to trees in the barrack square, then slept the night in empty barrack rooms. The officers (after coffee and omelettes in a café outside the barrack gates) went to sleep in a room in which there were two beds and one mattress for five of us. So Ing and Stone took the beds, and Walker, Misa and myself slept sideways on the mattress on the floor. Not the acme of comfort, but anything will do when you are *really* tired.'

There was wild alarm that night in St. Quentin. Rumours

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ran that the British were utterly defeated, and the Germans close at hand. The enemy might be into St. Quentin that very night. Many of its people were taking to flight. When the officers turned out early next morning to look for some kind of breakfast at the café by the barrack gates, they found it shut up. The proprietors had cleared out of the city soon after midnight.

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CHAPTER XIV

Continuation of the Retreat – The Action at Néry

At 4 a.m. on the 27th, Colonel Wilberforce marched with the Bays towards St. Quentin, and before reaching the city C Squadron rejoined. The greater part of the Regiment was now together again, only two troops of B Squadron and the Machine-gun Section being still missing. They would seem to have been still in St. Quentin when the rest of the Regiment passed through the place going on to Sérancourt, where it found billets, for Major Ing with his detachment did not march from the empty barracks where they had passed the night until 8.15 a.m.

St. Quentin was full of troops, some resting a while, others moving south. Efforts were being made to reorganise after the confused retreat that followed the battle, to get the men out of reach of immediate pursuit in order to give them a rest, and to restore normal distribution of supplies. That day Army Orders directed that transport was to dump all stores not immediately required, including quantities of ammunition, in order to clear the waggons and lorries for conveying southwards officers and men unfit to march. Major Ing's party had had a rest of some hours and, after breakfast obtained in the town, marched off at 8.15 a.m., taking the road south-east towards Ham on the Somme, on the strength of a report that the Cavalry Division was concentrating there – one of the many unfounded rumours that were in circulation. One of the retreating columns had been diverted in this direction. 'The road is full of infantry and transport retiring,' wrote Lieutenant Lamb in his diary. 'The infantry look absolutely "done," and are

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shuffling along singly or in little groups or have climbed on to waggons and are asleep. Occasionally one overtakes a formed body, but they are the exception, and the men we pass are men of all regiments muddled up. A lot of our horses are feeling the effect of the long days and little food, and also being saddled up sometimes all day and part of the night.'

Ham was reached at 1.15 p.m. It had been raining in the early hours of the day, but was now finer. The horses were off-saddled and picketed in a wet stubble-field, where most of them lay down in the mud. In a little cottage near-by some friendly French people got ready a lunch of coffee, bacon and bread for the officers. In a French newspaper they found little about what was happening in France, but encouraging reports of a million Russians invading Prussia! In the afternoon the horses were moved from the field into a farm, where they were made comfortable with plenty of hay and straw. Small parties of cavalry of various regiments came straggling into Ham and joined Ing's command. Amongst the officers with them were two of the 11th Hussars, one of the 19th Hussars, one of the 4th Dragoon Guards and a gunner officer. They brought little news, but there was another rumour (also misleading) that General Briggs with most of the 1st Cavalry Brigade was coming on from St. Quentin to Ham. No orders arrived. In the evening the cottagers improvised a meal of boiled eggs, sardines, salad, beer and coffee, and the officers slept that night on straw in empty cottages. Réveillé was to be at 6 a.m. on the Friday morning.

But at 1.30 a.m. orders arrived to saddle up and move off immediately through Noyon. The source from which the orders came is not clear. It seems to have been the result of a report that the German advance was nearing Ham. The detachment marched about 2.15 a.m., crossing the Somme

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and moving south by the main road to Guiscard, then by Crisolles and Genvry to the crossing of the Oise at Noyon. Troops and transport of Smith-Dorrien's command were about Noyon, on the way to the concentration of the Expeditionary Force south of the river. But there was no news of the Regiment or of the 1st Brigade, and Ing, picking up on the way stragglers from various cavalry units, took his party across the river at the village of Pontoise[1] where, after a tiring march, he found billets early in the day.

The Regiment was not far away. That day it had marched some 16 miles in blazing summer heat from Sérancourt to billets at Berlancourt, near Guiscard, about 8 miles north of Pontoise. During the day heavy firing was heard away to the north-east. It may have been the distant sound of Lanzérac's battle at Guise, or perhaps the gun-fire of a minor affair – the fight at Cérizy between German advanced troops and a covering rear-guard of Haig's Corps. With the Bays the impression was that it meant that the French were coming to our help; but this was guess-work, for, as the Commanding Officer noted that same day in his personal diary, 'Hitherto all officers have been kept in the profoundest ignorance not only of the situation of our army, but of all news both of the enemy and of our own side, and I am confident this is a *profound* mistake.'

War-time is always fertile in wild reports, and in the circumstances it is no wonder rumour was very busy during those days of the retreat. Ing's party heard both good and bad news, both unfounded. Things were not going well with the enemy. Large French forces were north of them.

[1]As the Oise has many bridges, there is more than one place named 'Pontoise,' the most important being the town 20 miles north-west of Paris. The Pontoise where Ing's party spent August 28, is a small village on a bend of the river, not quite 3 miles south-east of Noyon.

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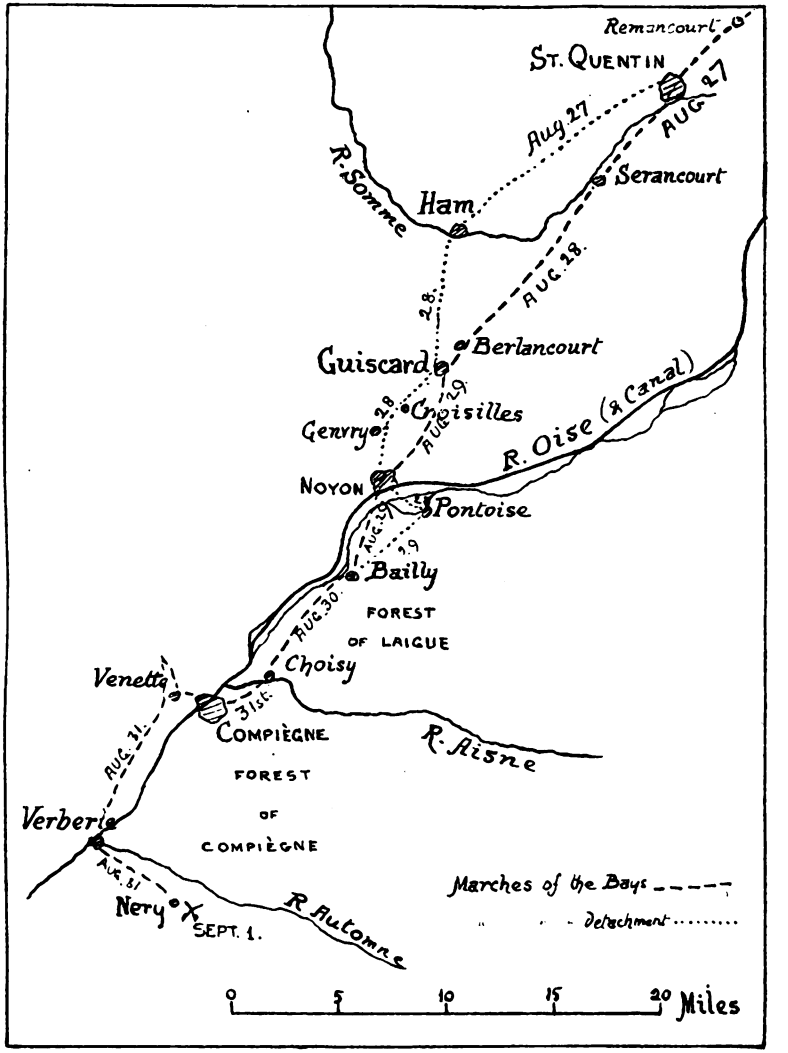

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(7) — The Retreat - St. Quentin to Néry. —

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Two French Army Corps had just detrained at Amiens. The German advance was stopped. Further rumours said they were beginning to retire. The German Government was actually suing for peace. Yet another group of rumours told that the Cavalry Division had had a very narrow escape. A remnant of its 1st Brigade, under General Briggs, probably consisting of the two squadrons of the Bays and two of the 11th Hussars, had been cut off, and was trying to hold out in the village of Estres between Le Cateau and St. Quentin, where the lost squadrons had barricaded themselves and were in danger of being 'overwhelmed' by the invaders.

By Saturday morning Major Ing's detachment had grown to 12 officers and about 200 men of various regiments, including the 4th and 11th Hussars, 9th Lancers and a whole squadron of the South Irish Horse. At 9 a.m. that day he at last got news of the Regiment. The 1st Cavalry Brigade had received orders to move by Noyon towards Compiègne, and Major J. S. Cawley, C.B., the Brigade Major, pushing on in advance reached Pontoise. He reported that the Regiment was all safe on the road from Berlancourt – continuing the retirement. Ing would have orders later on as to where it would billet that evening. But it was not till 6.30 that evening that at last orders came for him to march that night, with the various units he had collected, to Bailly, a village on the bend of the Oise half-way between Noyon and Compiègne, where he would rejoin the Regiment and the 1st Cavalry Brigade.

The Bays had marched early that morning from Berlancourt, and were not long on the road when there was touch with advanced patrols of the enemy's cavalry following up their retreat. Near Guiscard there was a sharp fight. The enemy brought a battery into action, and our casualties

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from shell-fire were 3 troopers and 6 horses wounded.[1]

After this, though there was no close contact, the enemy's patrols were continually in touch until the Bays passed through the British outpost line covering Noyon. The march continued across the canal and the Oise by a country road that runs south through the woodlands between the river and the western end of the Aisne heights – the ridge soon to be famous as a battleground for years to come. There was at last a halt at Bailly, by the riverside on the northern margin of the Forest of Laigue, where the 1st Cavalry Brigade was now concentrated. The officers found quarters in a château near the village.

A message to Pontoise reached Ing at 6.30 that evening. His detachment saddled up by daylight, but could not march till near 8.30 p.m. Just outside the bivouac they were halted for over an hour to allow a long column of infantry and transport moving southwards to get past and clear the road. It was near midnight when the detachment at last bivouacked at Bailly.

The whole Regiment was now reassembled. Even the Machine-gun Section had recovered its limbered waggons, missing since Le Cateau, and all the reorganised 1st Cavalry Brigade was collected about Bailly. Next day it made a short march to the Aisne by the western border of the Forest of Laigue. The whole of the Expeditionary Force was now being withdrawn south of that river. The Bays were billeted at Choisy-au-Bac, a village on the Aisne north-east of Compiègne. The officers found comfortable billets close to the village at the Château de Vivier, an old country house belonging to a relative of the Liaison Officer attached

[1]In his diary, Colonel Wilberforce estimated the force with which he was in touch as a Cavalry Brigade, one or two battalions and a battery.

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to the Regiment, Lieutenant Labouchère of the 8th French Dragoons.

The German First Army was now across the Somme, moving at first south-west to push back D'Amade's Sixth French Army, whose right was near the Oise on the British left. The retreat was continued on the 31st, the three divisions of the British left falling back through the woodlands of the Forest of Compiègne to the south of the little river Autonne, a tributary of the Oise. The cavalry protected the flank of the retirement. It was a blazing hot summer day, and the Regiment was on the move for many hours. Marching at 4.30 a.m., it crossed the Aisne, went through the northern part of Compiègne, and then across the Oise and up to the high ground near the village of Nevette on its west bank. Here the 1st Cavalry Brigade was posted, and all its Machine-gun Sections were brigaded under Lieutenant Bouverie (5th Dragoon Guards). To its left the 2nd Cavalry Brigade prolonged the line and kept touch with the French, who were retiring in frequent contact with the German advance.

The 1st Cavalry Brigade did not come into action, but during the morning there were frequent changes of position on the Nevette plateau. At first there was a move for some distance north along the Amiens road, then a withdrawal towards Nevette. But no enemy came in sight. There were other minor local moves, of which the object was not very clear, until shortly after noon orders came to move south. Three consecutive billets on the right bank of the Oise proved to be occupied by French cavalry. Eventually the Brigade was given the choice either to bivouac or make use of the village of Néry on the left bank, which was not required by the infantry.

General Briggs decided they should go to Néry, crossing the river at Verberie, where the Bays halted for a while to

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water their horses at the riverside. On crossing it they found themselves moving east amongst columns of the 4th Division coming into their bivouacs on the plateau south of the Autonne, and marched through pleasant country with outlying clumps of the Compiègne forest to the village of Néry, a small place at a road junction in a valley among the woodlands. The Regiment reached it just as dusk was coming on.

In view of the stirring events of the next day, it may be noted that on this last evening of August the whole of the British Expeditionary Force was assembled on a front of about 22 miles from west to east, in the angle between the Aisne and Oise. But the billets and bivouacs of its five Infantry Divisions did not form a continuous line. The 4th Division on the left was concentrated on the left bank of the Oise near La Verberie, with the 19th Infantry Brigade on its immediate right – the division and the brigade were now known as the 3rd Corps. They had the 4th Cavalry Brigade close by in their left rear, and the 2nd on the other side of the river covering that flank. But east of Néry there was a gap of about 4 miles to the ground occupied by the 5th Infantry Division. Still farther east lay the 3rd Division, and away to the north-east Haig's two divisions of the 1st Corps were near Soissons.

The Cavalry Brigade at Néry was in cavalry reserve in rear of the infantry of the 3rd Corps, and it was supposed to be fairly secure, because the nearest enemy masses were away to the westward. Northward for many a mile beyond the Autonne extended the great Forest of Compiègne – dense woodlands over which air observation was all but impossible.

During August 31, Von Kluck had changed the direction of his march from south-west to south-east. He was breaking off the pursuit of D'Amade's improvised Sixth Army, and

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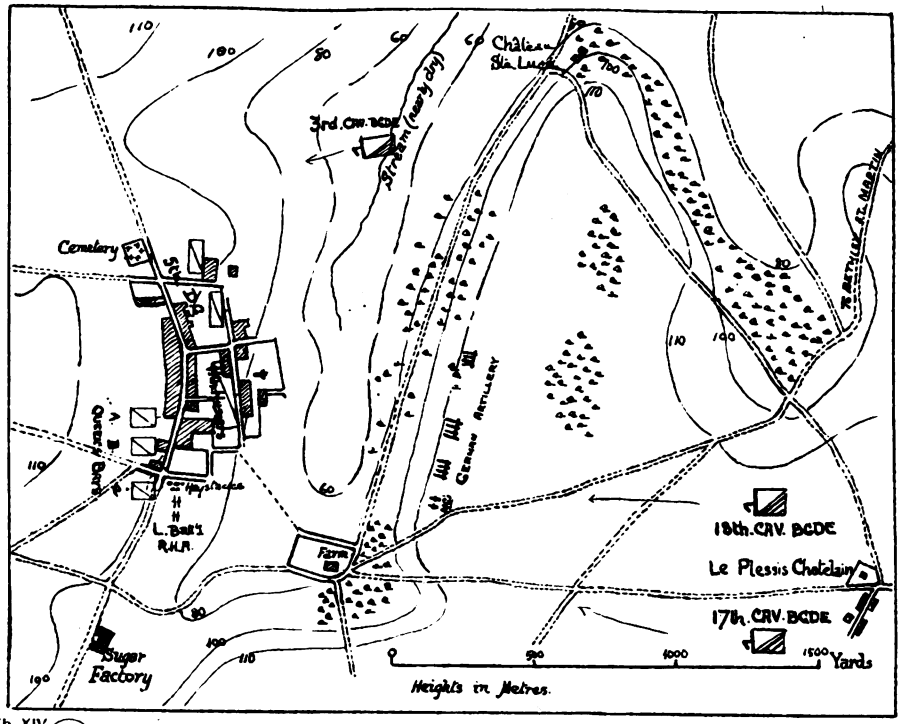

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NÉRY. Sept. 1. 1914

(Situation at beginning of the Action)

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swung round the heads of his columns to cross the Oise on its reach from Noyon to Compiègne. The change was not motived by any idea of operating against the British Force, which he falsely flattered himself was now practically out of action and retiring in a thoroughly beaten and disorganised condition. His orders indicated that he hoped to cut in on the line of retreat of Lanrézac's Fifth Army, which was retreating before his colleague Von Buelow, after the stand at Guise.

The British General Headquarters (then at Dammartin, some 20 miles south of Verberie and only about 15 miles from Paris) got through its air reconnaissance news of the change of direction during the day. Sir John French's orders for the continuance of the retreat next day, issued from Dammartin at 8.50 p.m. that evening, were prefaced by the information that:

'The enemy appears to have completed his westerly movement and was to-day pivoting round to the south, large columns having been observed advancing in a generally southerly or south-easterly direction on the front Noyon-Compiègne from about Roye-Montdidier. This advance is covered by at least two cavalry divisions, who reached the Oise this afternoon.'

But this information appears not to have reached the 1st Cavalry Brigade at Néry. Their orders for September 1, received that evening from General Allenby, were simply that the Brigade was '*to be ready to march at 5.30 a.m. and await orders.*' The Bays and L Battery, Royal Horse Artillery, had been the last units of the Brigade to reach Néry on the evening of August 31. Of the two other regiments the 5th Dragoon Guards had already been billeted on the north end of the village, with their horses in the open on the other side of the road; the 11th Hussars were in the middle of the place – the men in the houses on the east side of its

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main street, the horses all under cover of some kind in houses, yards, sheds and barns. L Battery had its guns, waggons and teams in a field just south of the village, east of a slightly sunken road running to the Sugar Factory where the Battery had its headquarters. The men of A and B Squadrons of the Bays were billeted on the west side of the village street, with their horses in the open in a field just west of it. C Squadron bivouacked in rear of the Battery west of the sunken road.

The night passed quietly, with the occasional disturbance caused by British transport moving southwards through the village. At 4.30 a.m. (September 1), under Brigade Standing Orders, all units saddled up and were ready to move, but a start could not be made until the expected orders from Divisional Headquarters were received. Dawn was coming, but there was a heavy mist, so dense that the view nowhere extended beyond a couple of hundred yards. Any immediate move seemed unlikely, and the Battery Commander took advantage of the delay to send his horses by sections to be watered at the Sugar Factory. The men were temporarily dismissed, and many of them began to cook breakfast. The guns of the Battery were standing side by side in the field near the road. On the other side of the road the horses of the Bays had been left in charge of a few of the men. Some of the gun horses were at the factory, others in the field near the guns.

The 11th Hussars had sent out one of their officers with a patrol into the woods to the north-east. Soon after 5 a.m. the Hussars came galloping in, and the Lieutenant who commanded them reported at Brigade Headquarters in the village that he had run into a body of German cavalry, and had been chased by a party of Uhlans nearly into Néry.

Just at this moment Colonel Wilberforce of the Bays was walking up the village street on his way to Headquarters,

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to find out if there was any prospect of an immediate move. Some of the Hussar Scouts had passed him on their way to Headquarters, and one of them told him they had run into enemy cavalry about half a mile away. Less than five minutes after, he heard a loud noise which he at first thought to be the explosion of an ammunition-box. It was the report of a German gun, and swift after it came the crash of exploding shells at the south end of the village, and the sharp reports of hostile guns in action.[1] He turned at once and hurried back to the danger-point to organise the local defence.

The first hostile shell burst in the horse lines of the Bays. Another almost at the same moment burst over the village near Brigade Headquarters, where General Briggs had with him his Brigade-Major (Major J. S. Cawley, C.B.) and the Battery Commander (Major the Hon. W. D. Sclater-Booth). Part of the shell came through the roof, and General Briggs picked up its time-fuse, and saw that it was set for 800 metres. For a little while only the enemy's artillery was in action, concentrating its fire on the positions occupied by the Bays and the Battery. The Brigadier at once sent off motor-cyclists to warn General Allenby (Cavalry Division) and General Snow (4th Division) that the 1st Cavalry Brigade was attacked by enemy cavalry, strength unknown. So far it seemed likely that the hostile force was not a large one. The Brigadier directed Colonel Pitman to extend his regiment (the 11th Hussars) to take over the north end of the village from the 5th Dragoon Guards, detaching one squadron as a brigade reserve, and gave Colonel Ansell a free hand to act with the Dragoon Guards against the right flank of the enemy.

[1]There is (as so often happens in war) a conflict of evidence as to the precise time when the German guns opened fire. The diary of L Battery puts it at 5.5 a.m.; that of the Queen's Bays at 5.15; that of the 11th Hussars at 5.30; and a personal narrative of Colonel Wilberforce at 5.45 a.m. Various indications suggest the actual time was about 5.40 to 5.45 a.m.

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The mist still hung on the ground, but it was lighter than it had been at the outset. Not quite half a mile away, opposite the south end of Néry, the flashes of the German battery were tearing through the haze, and presently hostile rifle- and machine-gun fire opened. The first shells had burst among the horses of the Bays picketed west of the road, and among the gun horses to the east of it. The high-explosive projectiles were doing deadly work. A team of battery horses standing in their harness went down in a heap. Some of the horses were simply cut in two. Several of the cavalry horses were killed or horribly maimed. The rest stampeded, breaking from their pickets and galloping away in wild panic, carrying with them men who tried to check their flight. Officers and men of the Bays were hurrying to improvise a firing-line. The gunners were dragging by man-power three of their guns into action. Major Sclater Booth, the Battery Commander, hurrying from Headquarters to rejoin his guns, was caught by a shell as he left the shelter of the village street, and dropped wounded and temporarily blinded and stunned among the beet plants in the field, where he lay for hours unnoticed while the fight went on. Captain Bradbury, the next senior Royal Artillery officer, and one of the heroes of the day, had already taken command of the gunners.

Lieutenant Lamb, the Machine-gun Officer of the Bays, had got a few of his men together, the rest were in the village. His horses were luckily behind its southern houses, and he was able at once to run his two guns out, protected at first by a low wall, and bring them into action on the sunken road to the left rear of the battery. As he brought them along he noticed that the horses of A and B Squadrons were following the stampeded flight of those of C. As he came into action, shells were bursting and bullets flying. He did splendid service by opening fire with his machine-

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guns, taking for their target the flashes of the enemy's artillery, and at that short range giving most welcome help to the handful of gunners who had already got three of their guns into action against the eight guns of the enemy – two German horse batteries. Another enemy battery was firing on the village. Here, in shelter of the houses and garden walls, the Hussars were replying with rifles and machine-guns. Colonel Ansell went out from its north end with two squadrons of the 5th Dragoon Guards to counter-attack on the enemy's flank. Luckily the move was just in time to counter an advance round the village. In the fog he ran into a large enemy force. The German account reveals that these were two regiments – 9th Uhlans and 3rd Cuirassiers. A fire fight followed, Ansell was mortally wounded, and the two squadrons fell back before superior numbers, putting up a fine fight as they withdrew. The Germans suffered heavy loss and stopped their advance, making no further attempt on this side. Evidently the haze concealed the weakness in numbers of the Dragoons, whose plucky resistance impressed them with the idea that they were up against very serious opposition.

The 1st Cavalry Brigade had been completely surprised. It was outgunned and heavily outnumbered. There was grave risk that the affair would end in a disaster. But no one thought of this, and every one set to work in a matter-of-fact way to do what was nearest to hand to put up a good fight. It was a piece of good luck, however, that the enemy was now uncertain as to what force he had run up against at Néry, and in the haze did not grasp the full advantage of the situation. The Germans indeed came into action in somewhat haphazard fashion, in a mental as well as a physical fog, and trying to smash their way by a frontal attack at the close range suggested by the mist, without organising a deliberate enveloping attack that

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their superiority of numbers might have made swiftly successful.

Before following further the story of the fight, let us see what had been the course of events on the German side that led to this contact at Néry. The knowledge of this was at first vague on our side, and indeed was not nearly complete till the German accounts of their movements on August 31 were published after the war.

As has already been mentioned, Von Kluck had changed the direction of his march on that day. His orders for August 31 were that the direction of the advance for the First German Army was to change from south-west to south-east. Its immediate object was to intercept the retreat of Lanrézac's army, and he was not yet aware that the British were withdrawing due south in his front. Von Marwitz's Cavalry Corps was sent on in advance to cover the movement of the First Army. The 4th Cavalry Division (one of the three belonging to the Corps) led the way, and on August 31 crossed the Oise and moved through the Laigue Forest, its original objective being Villers Cotterets in the woods south of Soissons. He believed that the British were for the time being out of action and making a confused retreat well to the southward, and that his cavalry would be able to cut in upon the line of retreat of the French left.

After crossing the Oise, Von Marwitz (with the right corps of the German cavalry advance) got information that there were considerable enemy forces not far off to the southward in the forest region, and in the afternoon of August 31 he decided to change the direction of his line of march and clear up the situation in that direction. He moved with two of his divisions (2nd and 9th) down the left bank of the Oise by the margin of the Forest of Compiègne, and late in the day came in contact in the dusk with an outpost line – that of the British 3rd Corps.

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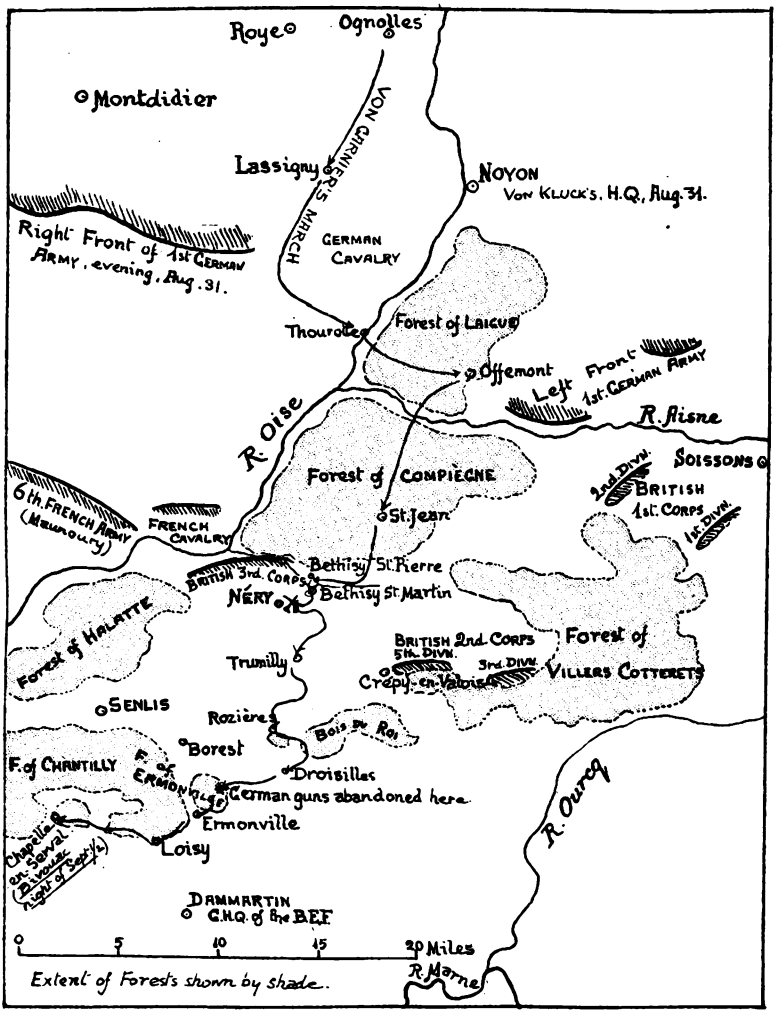

Ch XIV.

9 Sketch showing general situation on the eve of the action at Néry, & the march of Von Garnier's Cavalry Division on Aug. 31 & Sept. 1.

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His remaining division (the 4th) had led the advance and was some miles to the eastward in the Laigue Forest, when he ordered the change of direction. The 4th Division was commanded by General von Garnier. His force was made up of three cavalry brigades, each of two regiments, and a four-gun battery, with divisional troops. Its organisation was as follows:

3rd Cavalry Brigade . 2nd Cuirassiers and 9th Uhlans.
17th „ „ . 17th and 18th Dragoons.
18th „ „ . 15th and 16th Hussars.
Horse Artillery. Three batteries, each of four guns.
2nd Guard Machine-gun Battery (6 M.G.s).
Pioneer detachment.[1]

Von Garnier received the orders for the southward move when he was halting on the afternoon of the 31st at Offemont in the Laigue Forest. He had been on the move since 2 a.m., and gave his men a rest at Offemont from 3 to 6 p.m. He then turned south and crossed the Aisne at dusk, and entered the Forest of Compiègne. Men and horses were tired, and he moved at a walk through the woods. He reached their southern edge soon after midnight, and halted at the village of Bethisy St. Pierre in the Autonne valley, about 2 miles north-east of Néry, left a rear-guard there and moved the main body across the stream to Bethisy St. Martin on its south bank. In the villages he found some broken-down and abandoned British lorries.

[1]Normally there was a Jaeger battalion (with 6 M.G.s attached) in each German Cavalry Division. But by August 31, Von Kluck had formed a group of five Jaeger battalions, withdrawn from the Cavalry Divisions to act as a special unit. Thus, when Von Garnier made his move into the woodland region beyond the Oise, he had not this useful support with him. In the old German army, Jaeger battalions were formed largely of men drawn from the forest and hill districts of the German Empire, and the withdrawal of these skilled woodmen was a serious loss to Von Garnier.

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The villagers, misled by being addressed in French by officers with the first comers, thought at first that they were friends, and brought them welcome hot drinks, telling them that British troops had passed through the day before.[1]

At 4 a.m. Von Garnier moved his column through the mist towards the plateau opposite Néry, halted, and sent out patrols. Numbers of the men dismounted and snatched a short sleep beside their horses. Before long a patrol came in with the report that there was a British force in Néry. Von Garnier decided to attack them. Covered by the woods, his division had slipped through a wide gap of some miles between the British 2nd and 3rd Corps. He thought he had to deal with an isolated detachment, and pushing on to the crest of the high ground, he formed up his force and opened fire with his guns at close range, to make sure of his targets and intensify the effect of the hoped-for surprise.

For over two hours it was for our men a fight against terribly unequal odds, with the additional handicap that it was begun in the midst of the confusion created by the surprise attack at such close quarters, so that the defence was gradually improvised, beginning by groups of officers and men, on their own initiative, forming a firing-line south of the village to support the gunners by rifle-fire, while these handled their guns into position in the open field and kept them in action by bringing up ammunition from the waggons and limbers across some 20 yards of shell- and bullet-swept ground. Partly sheltered in the sunken way near the cross-road at the southern exit from the village, Lamb, with a few of his men, kept the two machine guns

[1]A French countryman saw the Germans marching through Bethisy St. Martin. If he had known that a British cavalry brigade was close by at Néry he might have done very useful service. However, he tried to be helpful, and got a report through to the outposts of the 2nd Division some 5 miles away at Crépy. From Divisional H.Q. the news was sent to our G.H.Q. at Dammartin, and thence to the 3rd Division H.Q. – too late, however, for the warning to reach Néry.

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in action, making the enemy's artillery his target, firing thousands of rounds, and giving most effective support to our battery. Sometimes he helped in the service of his guns, but much of the time he was busy with a couple of his men filling belts by hand to keep the guns supplied with ammunition. Colonel Wilberforce in his narrative tells how, whenever he went to see him, he found him smoking his pipe, with his two guns steaming beside him, the water boiling in their jackets.[1]

At the outset of the attack the Germans had one of their batteries away to their right firing at the north end of Néry, but before long they concentrated their chief efforts against the flank held by the Bays and L Battery, and brought the detached battery to their left, where they had thus twelve guns in action firing high-explosive shells at a range of less than 1000 yards. The marvel is that L Battery survived even the first few minutes of this deadly fire. Officers and men fell fast, two guns were knocked out, and soon only one was in action. It was served for a while by Captain Bradbury, Battery-Sergeant-Major Dobell, and Sergeant Nelson (who had already been wounded). Bradbury, running back to the waggons to bring up ammunition, was mortally wounded by a German shell, which shattered both his legs. As he was taken back across the sunken road, he passed the Colonel of the Bays. 'As he was carried past me, with both his legs shot off,' writes Colonel Wilberforce, 'he said "Hallo, Colonel, they have been giving us a warm time, haven't they ? " ' He died a few hours later. The only gun still in action was now silenced at last. This was about 7.15 a.m. 'The Battery-Sergeant-Major,' says Colonel

[1]Lieutenant Lamb was mentioned in dispatches and awarded the D.S.O., and the seven men who served the machine guns under his orders at Néry – Lance-Corporal Webb, and Privates Goodchild, Phillips, Fogg, Emmet, Ellicock and Horne – were all mentioned in the dispatches of October 19, 1914. Ellicock, who was wounded, was given the D.C.M. He died in hospital.

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Wilberforce, 'came back slowly, and I gave him an apple and a cigarette. After smoking this, he collected some of his men and went back into the firing-line. A splendid fellow!'

But the Germans had suffered heavily, under the shell-fire of L Battery, and the rifle- and machine-gun fire that told severely at this short range. As for the two batteries immediately in front of the Bays, Colonel Wilberforce's evidence is that 'by degrees these eight guns ceased firing, and when the mist cleared and we could see the guns distinctly every time any one came near them, Vickers and all the rifles we had slated them with fire until the Germans gave up all attempt either to serve them or to get them away.'

Help was now near at hand, but before telling how the fight ended let us note that early in the day a small party of the Bays went forward, reached the buildings of the Sugar Factory about 400 yards away, and by their rifle-fire checked a German advance on this side. Towards the close of the action, as the enemy was apparently reluctant to attack our centre and left in Néry itself, and was directing his main efforts against the position immediately south of the village, General Briggs sent detachments of the Hussars and Dragoon Guards to prolong the line on that side. The enemy had occupied by this time some outlying buildings east of the Sugar Factory. A plucky counter-attack was attempted against them by Lieutenants De Crespigny and Misa with about fifteen men. De Crespigny was killed here,[1]

[1]By the death of Lieutenant Norman Champion de Crespigny, the Bays lost a brilliant young officer of high promise. General Allenby (G.O.C. Cavalry Division) on hearing the news, wrote to his mother: 'Dear Lady de Crespigny, – I and the whole of the Cavalry Division sympathise with you, and we feel deeply for Norman's loss. But I must tell you that he died a hero's death. The brigade was hotly engaged, and on the Bays fell the brunt of the fighting on September 1. Norman, with a few men, was holding an important tactical point, and he held it

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and of the party only Misa and two of his men came back unwounded.

The reinforcements now approaching were the 4th Cavalry Brigade with its attached battery (I Battery, R.H.A.) and a couple of battalions from the Third Army Corps. They had stood to, early in the day, as the sound of heavy firing was heard; but at first there was some doubt as to its direction. Some thought it came from the south and that it meant the enemy had cut in upon the line of retreat, and a howitzer battery of the Third Army Corps was actually placed in position facing southward to cover a line of road on that side. But as the firing increased it was clear the fight was to the eastward, and the reinforcements started off in this direction, the Cavalry Brigade leading. Presently they came upon stampeded horses, mostly of the Bays, and there were fears that this meant a disaster. Then they picked up some of General Briggs's motor-cyclists, and learned that the fight was at Néry. As they approached the place, Sergeant-Major Dobell of L Battery appeared mounted on a cavalry horse and sent by the Brigadier to give information as to the position, and guide the Royal Horse Artillery Battery to a point where it could open on the German guns.

Soon after 8 a.m. I Battery came into action away to the right rear of the British line, on high ground, and directed its fire on the crest of the rising ground of the German position and its reverse slope. Lamb's machine-guns dealt effectively with the attempts of the Germans in his front to bring up their teams and withdraw their guns. The machine-guns and the rifle-fire of the Bays had sealed the fate of the two batteries on the German left. Major Ing, with some of the Bays, went forward to the abandoned gun position as

till every man was killed or wounded. No man could have done more, few would have done as much. With deepest sympathy, yours sincerely, E. H. H. Allenby.'

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the enemy retired. The four guns of the other battery away to the right were got away.

This new artillery-fire in support of the defence warned Von Garnier that the British were being reinforced, and it was time for him to go. Until the last shots were fired, about 9.45 a.m., he was fighting a rear-guard action to cover his withdrawal. Our infantry arrived only in time to fire a few rifle-shots at the last of the enemy. The Germans drew off eastwards towards the farm and hamlet of Le Plessis Châtelain. There was only a brief pursuit, and the detachment of the 11th Hussars engaged in it drew off as the retiring enemy neared the farm. Seventy-eight unwounded prisoners, stragglers from the enemy, were taken. Among them were men of all the six cavalry regiments of Von Garnier's Division. The German dead on the field of fight were all cavalry and artillery men. Of the latter a large number lay round and in rear of the eight abandoned guns. The 11th Hussars detachment had galloped through the battery just as the 1st Middlesex were coming up from the right to the same spot.[1]

The losses of the Bays in the action were 1 officer and 4 other ranks killed, and 8 officers and 35 other ranks

[1]Von Garnier hoped to get back to the cover of the Compiègne Woods, but on reports that British troops were now holding the crossings of the Autonne, and realising that he had considerable enemy forces to east and west of him, he took the bold resolution of striking off to the southwards. Short of ammunition and food supplies, he made up for the latter deficiency to some extent by requisitions in the villages, and by nightfall on September 1, had reached the southern belt of forests between the Oise and the Ourcq. In one village he ran into and captured a British ammunition column, but it was useless to him, and he abandoned it. During September 2, the Division, broken up into four detachments, was hidden in the Bois du Roi and the forests of Chantilly and Ermenonville. In the latter, Von Garnier abandoned his four remaining guns, which were found and secured next day by a British column retiring southwards. On the 3rd, he rejoined Von Kluck's advance through the woods. Reports of Von Garnier's horsemen seen at various points well behind our front, led to the hurried withdrawal of the British G.H.Q. from Dammartin across the Marne to Lagny.

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wounded. About 80 horses were killed, and a large number stampeded and were temporarily or permanently lost.

The casualties among the officers were Lieutenant Champion de Crespigny, killed; Second Lieutenant L. W. White, seriously wounded; Major G. H. A. Ing, Major A. E. W. Harman, the Adjutant, Captain E. S. Chance, Captain W. F. G. Renton and Second Lieutenant H. D. St. G. Cardew, wounded; and Lieutenant E. Walker and Lieutenant F. D. R. Milne, slightly wounded but still fit for duty.

The action of Néry was a minor affair, though it would have counted as a battle in some of our little wars since Crimean days. But if the forces in the fight were not large, it was a brilliant feat of arms, a victory won when disaster seemed imminent, and won against a superior force, with prisoners and captured guns as its trophies – the first guns taken by a British force in the Great War.

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CHAPTER XV

End of the Retreat – The Battle of the Marne– Advance to the Aisne

The fight at Néry had ended shortly before 10 a.m. A little after 11 the retreat was resumed. In the interval there had been a busy time, clearing the battlefield of wounded and reorganising for the march. Teams from I Battery removed the badly damaged guns of L Battery. Lieutenant Lamb made good the losses in his machine-gun and waggon teams with some horses that had belonged to L Battery and a few captured German horses. His limbered waggons were heaped with equipment and arms collected on the scene of the fight.

When the brigade moved off, few of the Bays were mounted. The rear-guard troop of the Regiment, almost at the last moment, found Major Sclater Booth, wounded and still hardly conscious, lying among the high-growing beet plants between the village and the place where his battery had come into action. He was handed over to the care of I Battery.

It was a blazing hot day, and the march was a slow one of only 8 miles in all across country, with frequent halts. Stragglers came in, and some of the stampeded horses were recovered. At 6 p.m. the march ended at the village of Borest on the northern margin of the Forest of Ermonville, and not quite 5 miles from the town of Senlis. The officers were hospitably received at a country house near the village. During the evening there was firing heard not far away, and a report that German cavalry were coming, but it seems to have been only an unimportant skirmish between patrols.

At Borest more men and horses rejoined the Bays, and in

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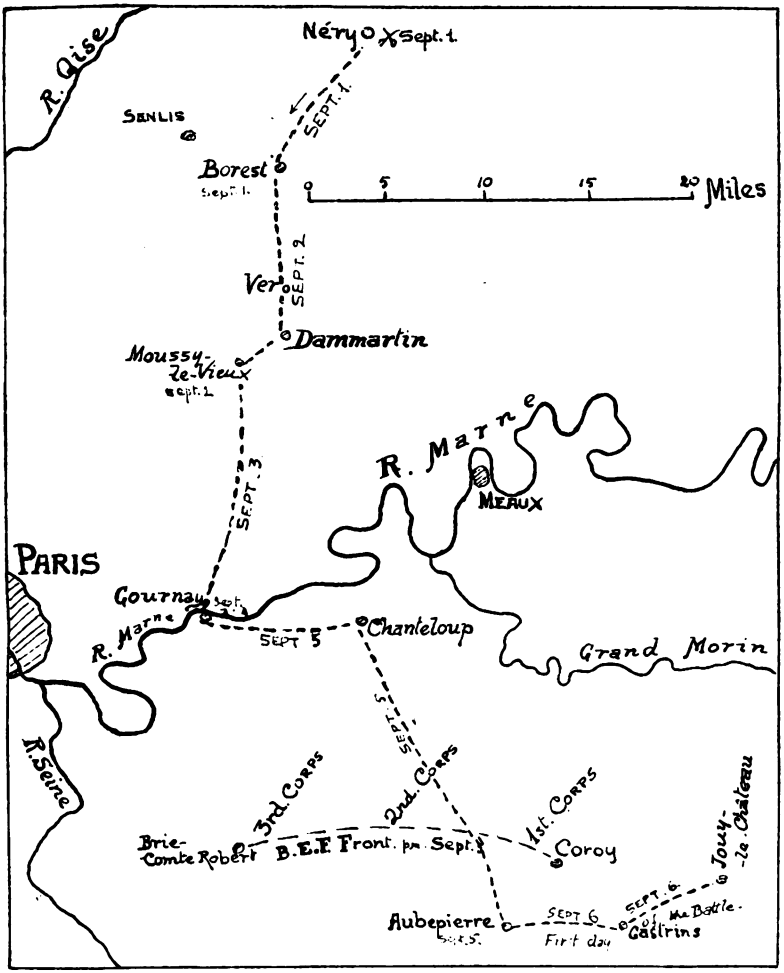

Ch. XV (10) —Last Days of the Retreat.—

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his diary that night Colonel Wilberforce noted that the effective strength of the Regiment now was:

	Men.	Horses.
A . . .	93	63
B . . .	105	80
C . . .	62	41
H.Q. . .	71	81

He added: 'As far as I can ascertain we had 10 killed and 38 wounded out of about 110 all told in the firing-line'; but later he noted that the losses were '14 killed, 44 wounded.'

The march was resumed at 6 a.m. on September 2. It was a hot day, but the first stage of the march was along the sandy ridges in the shade of trees in the Forest of Ermonville. There was an early halt soon after leaving the forest, and till the afternoon the Bays held the village of Ver, 6 miles south of Borest, guarding the crossing of the little river Launette, a tributary of the Oise. At 3.30 p.m. the march was resumed through open, undulating country, past Dammartin to billets at Moussy-le-Vieux. The officers secured quarters in a country house locked up and deserted by its owners. The first entrance was effected by one of the ground-floor windows. The place had hardly been occupied when a German aeroplane flew overhead.

Next day there was a start at 5 a.m., and a march of about 10 miles to Gournay on the south bank of the Marne, only some 7 miles from the eastern barriers of Paris. The Regiment bivouacked in a field by the riverside, and all ranks had the delight of bathing and swimming in the Marne. The orders were to continue the retreat at 4 a.m. next morning, but late in the day they were countermanded, and there was the welcome news that there was to be a day of rest on September 4. It was a rest under ideal conditions,

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in fine weather, and with the river inviting every one to the refreshment of more swimming and bathing during the day.

The bridges of the Marne were now being blown up after the last of our troops crossed the river, for according to General Joffre's plans at this date the retreat was to be continued much farther south. On the 5th the Bays had a long march, much of it over roads where they were frequently held up by or delayed in passing columns of troops and long trains of transport. The first stage was due eastward to Chateloupe, where the Regiment went into billets at 1 p.m. after an early start at 4.30 a.m. But in the afternoon there came orders to march again at 4 p.m., and then there was a long weary trek south-eastward to billets at Aubepierre, which was reached about nine in the evening. Horses and men were very tired.

This was the last day of the long retreat from Mons. Next day – Sunday, September 6 – when the Regiment moved some miles eastward and again came in touch with enemy cavalry, few realised that an allied counter-offensive against the invaders had begun. The whole plan of the Allies had undergone a sudden change as the result of hurried conferences between Galliéni, the General Commanding at Paris; the French Commander-in-Chief, General Joffre; and Sir John French, who was responsible for the British Expeditionary Force.

We are not telling the story of the Great War on the Western Front, but only following the fortunes of a single regiment playing its part in these gigantic operations. But to make intelligible the movements even of one regiment it is well, from time to time, to glance briefly at the general course of events mostly during their actual progress far beyond the ken of mere units in the opposing armies, and known, it may be, only with serious limitations, even to those who are directing the operations on each side under all the

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difficulties of 'the fog of war.' Even now one can only be sure in broadest outline of what happened in those early days of September 1914, when the tide was about to turn in favour of the Allies in a great battle on the Marne, of which many important details are still the obscure subjects of controversy.

Here it is perhaps sufficient to note that on the evening of September 4, when Sir John French issued his orders for next day, he was still acting in pursuance of the directions for the further retirement of the Allies, which Joffre had intended to carry southward beyond not only the Marne, but also the Aube and the upper Seine. It had been arranged that the British should in their retirement keep in touch with the fortified region of Paris to their left and the French Fifth Army (Franchet d'Espérey) on their right. That very evening, however, Joffre had issued orders for a general advance. The change of plans was the result of action taken at Paris by Galliéni, who, besides the garrison of the fortified region, had under his immediate direction Maunoury's Sixth French Army immediately north of it. Von Kluck, on the enemy's right, was moving south-east across the Marne, pushing part of his army south of the river, and keeping the remainder north of it as a flank-guard against Maunoury. A gap was opening between Von Kluck's First German Army and the Second Army under Von Buelow, which was over the Marne, farther east, in pursuit of D'Espérey. Galliéni had already sent Maunoury forward to threaten Von Kluck's flank, when Joffre issued his orders for the French centre to stand fast, while the forces on his left – Sixth Army (Maunoury), the British, and the Fifth Army (D'Espérey) advanced against the enemy left on flank and front.

But this information only reached Sir John early on the 5th, while his three corps were still retiring. His orders for

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the general advance of the British, to begin on the 6th, were not issued till 5.15 p.m. on the 5th. But preparations were already being made for changing the retreat into an offensive in combination with the French armies to our right and left. Allenby, with the three Cavalry Brigades now under his immediate command (1st, 2nd, and 4th), was to cover the right of our advance and keep touch with the French cavalry on D'Espérey's left. The break up of the 1st Cavalry Brigade from its billets on the afternoon of the 5th, and the long trek of the Bays to Aubépierre was part of the concentration of the three Brigades to the right.

The directions to the cavalry, included in the order for the advance issued at 5.15 on the afternoon of the 5th, were that Allenby, with the 1st, 2nd and 4th Brigades, was to cover the advance of our right on the line Jouy-le-Châtel to Coulommiers. Gough, with the 3rd and 5th Brigades, was to cover the advance of our centre and left. Allenby's orders that evening to his 1st Brigade were that it was to move eastward to Jouy-le-Châtel. The result was renewed contact with the enemy's forces on that side.

The Bays marched off at 6.30 a.m., the first order to the Brigade being to move on to Gastins. On reaching this point it came in touch with enemy cavalry retiring in its front. The Bays were not engaged, but there were some shells from a horse battery with the Germans. (What was happening was that Von Kluck was falling back towards the line of the Grand Morin, covering the movement with his cavalry supported by some Jaeger battalions.) On other parts of the front there were serious encounters with the enemy's rear-guards, but here there was only desultory skirmishing, and the enemy was drawing off rapidly. At 2 p.m. the Bays were ordered to clear some farms in front, but found that the Germans had already abandoned them. One prisoner was secured, a straggler from a Cuirassier regiment.

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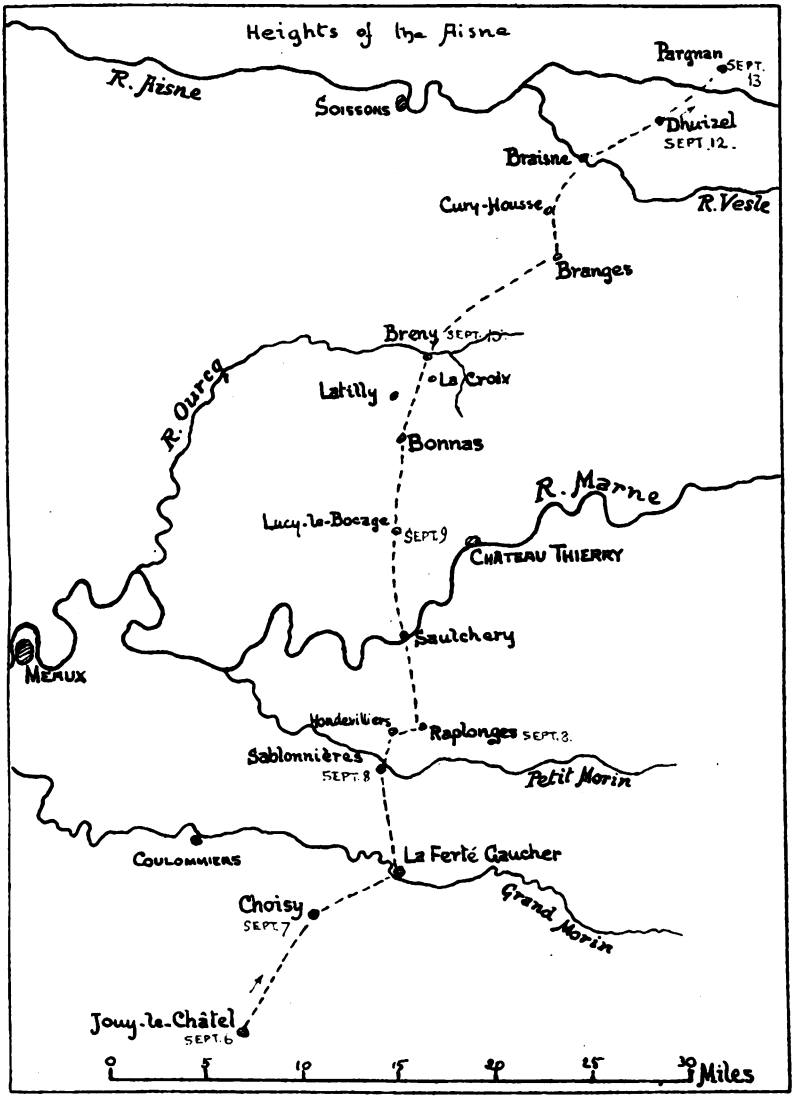

Ch. XV. (11) — The Advance to the Aisne. —

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There was a long halt at Gastins, and it was near evening when orders came to move forward to Jouy-le-Châtel, farther east. The march was uneventful and ended after dark by the Regiment bivouacking in a field where some haystacks gave a little shelter. The strength of the Regiment, as shown by the field state on this first day of the advance, was:

Officers, Effective –	Wanting to Complete –
17	7
N.C.O.'s and Men –	
423	113
Horses, riding – 304	223
„ draught – 48	26

Next morning, September 7, there was a start at 4 a.m. The direction was now north-eastward towards the Grand Morin, and this swing round towards the north gave the assurance that the advance had at last begun in earnest. The enemy was retiring, fighting a series of minor rear-guard actions, and this gave our men a sense of success. With later records of the whole battle of the Marne available, we now know during these days the British advance had in its front no very considerable force. But for all that it was playing a most important part in the battle. It was pushing into the dangerous gap that had opened between Von Kluck and Von Buelow's armies. On one side of the gap Von Kluck was withdrawing his corps that had crossed the Marne in order to deal with the attack on the flank from Paris; east of it Von Buelow was fighting to hold D'Espérey's advance. The gap itself was held against us mostly by cavalry with their horse batteries and supporting Jaeger detachments of riflemen and machine-gunners. As they fell back before the British advance they were fighting on

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ground eminently favourable for rear-guard tactics. The retirement was across the tributaries of the Marne – streams and little rivers divided by long swells and ridges of the plateau, with many villages, farms and clumps of wood; and the Grand Morin and the Marne were serious obstacles to an advance, for they ran between steep banks, and could only be crossed where a bridge or a ferry marked the place at which the ground on each side made the passage accessible.

On the 7th the Bays, acting as the reserve of the Brigade, were not engaged with the enemy. The day's march was on Choisy, a little south of the Grand Morin. Away to the left at Moncel, the 9th Lancers at the head of the 2nd Cavalry Brigade were charged by the 1st Dragoons of the Prussian Guard. Later in the day, a couple of miles south of Choisy, a detachment of the same regiment attempted a charge against a squadron of the 18th Hussars, which was working forward on the right front of the 1st Cavalry Brigade.[1] The Hussars practically destroyed the detachment by rapid fire opened at 200 yards' range. Sixty-three of the Prussian Dragoons were killed or wounded, only three escaped and the Hussars had no casualties. Choisy was reached in the evening as the advanced guard of one of Haig's columns was coming up to the village. The Bays billeted close by at the hamlet of La Bouchetterie.

That evening on the left the 2nd and 3rd Corps of the British Force were across the Grand Morin, and on the right the French Fifth Army had three of its four corps over it, so the Germans made no attempt to hold the river line in front of the Cavalry Division, but fell back to the Petit Morin. Orders for September 8 were to force this river line and push on towards the Marne. Moving off at 3.30 a.m. on the 8th, the Grand Morin was crossed at La Ferté

[1]These were among the very few instances in the whole war when the German cavalry attempted to use the *arme blanche*.

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Gaucher, and the march of the 1st Cavalry Brigade was then directed in rather close country towards Sablonnières on the Petit Morin, where two bridges were reported to be still standing and lightly held by the enemy. The 5th Dragoon Guards, acting as advanced guard, drove small parties of the enemy before them; but there was nothing that could be called a show of serious opposition till the descent into the valley of the river was reached, when the Germans were found to be holding on at all the crossing points. Those defending the Sablonnières crossing belonged to crack regiments – Cavalry and Jaegers of the Guard.

By 8.30 a.m. close reconnaissance had led to the decision that all along the Petit Morin the crossings were too strongly held and too difficult to be forced by the advanced cavalry, and it must be held up till the infantry was available.[1] By 9 p.m. the 1st Guards Brigade (two Guards and two Highland Battalions) had arrived with some of its divisional artillery, and came into action away to the right at the Bellot crossing, about a mile and a half upstream from Sablonnières. The crossing was forced and a flank advance down the north bank was made towards Sablonnières. The leading battalion (1st Battalion Cameron Highlanders), with some dismounted troopers of the 4th Cavalry Brigade, which had crossed at Bellot, gradually drove in the Jaegers of the Guard who tried to bar their way. From the high ground on the south bank the Bays were able to watch the closing scene of the fight. Major Hall gives thus his impression of it: 'This action was one of the most dramatic that I saw. Below us in the river valley a number of Garde Jaegers were holding up the advance of a Highland battalion. The Jaegers were concealed in a field of lucerne, and we could watch the deployment and attack of our infantry against

[1]The 5th Dragoon Guards made a determined attempt to force a crossing before the arrival of the infantry, but were repulsed, losing several men and officers.

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them. When the Highlanders got too close, the enemy attempted to get away, getting up in ones and twos out of the lucerne. Immediately the whole battalion opened fire, and ground round the retiring Germans was simply spurting dust, and one after another they dropped; I don't think that any of them (to the number of about 50) got more than a hundred yards. We also opened fire from the hillside above them. In this case the Jaegers were left as a rear-guard without any artillery support, and just meant to be sacrificed as a delaying force. Very gallantly they did their job, too.'

Soon after 1 p.m. Sablonnières was occupied, with both its bridges intact. Some 60 of the Jaegers were made prisoners in the village – 'huge men.'

The cavalry crossed the river and in the afternoon pushed on towards the Marne. Heavy cannonading was heard all day to west and east, and on towards evening there was a thunderstorm and a downpour of rain. The Bays marched through Hondevilliers and found billets in the village of Replonges – 'a filthy place.'

On the 9th all arms had a hard day's work. After a start at dawn, the 1st Cavalry Brigade had gone into billets under drenching rain about 3.30 p.m.; but about 5 p.m. orders were received that the Brigade was, under cover of darkness, to seize two crossings of the Marne – one at Saulchéry and the other about 4 miles to the left of it. The Bays led the advance of the Brigade on Saulchéry, the 11th Hussars being directed to seize the other bridge. It was expected that the Germans would make a hard fight on the strong line of the Marne. But when Captain Springfield, pushing forward, came in sight of Saulchéry, there was no sign of an enemy to be seen. The bridge was found intact but for the time being impassable, blocked with barbed wire – 'wired up like a big birdcage.' There were at first suspicions that it might be mined and left as a trap, but careful inspec-

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tion showed no indication of this, and work began to clear the crossing, while the Regiment came up.

In the early morning our aircraft had discovered that all along the neighbouring reaches of the river bridges that were held the evening before were all abandoned. The battle of the Marne was ending or over. Under orders issued the evening before, the enemy had begun his retreat to the Aisne.[1]

The Bays crossed the river, and as they went up the high ground of the north bank had the unpleasant experience of being shelled by a British battery, whose commander evidently took them for a retiring German rear-guard. Happily, the shooting was bad and no damage was done.

While the bridge was being cleared of its wire entanglement, some German officers in a motor-car had appeared at the far end of the village street, but dashed off in a cloud of dust before a shot could be fired at them. As the Bays marched northward from Saulchéry a sharp look-out was kept for enemy stragglers or rear-guards, the Regiment being the advanced unit on this line of march. Near the hamlet of Le Thiolet, Lieutenant Kingstone's troop was fired on from a small copse. C Squadron went to his assistance, and the little skirmish was soon over, with the result that a German officer and 4 of his men were killed, and the rest – 21 in all – surrendered. Soon after, Lieutenant Barnard's troop of A Squadron shot one German and

[1]The orders were issued by Colonel Hentsch, an officer of the German High Command sent to examine the situation, with powers to give orders in the name of the Chief of the Staff. His decision was taken after a consultation with Von Buelow, and against the protest of Von Kluck. 'Whether the decision of the Second Army Headquarters and the order of Lieut.-Colonel Hentsch to the First Army Headquarters to retreat, were actually rendered necessary by the situation, must be decided by historical research in future years,' wrote Ludendorff. General Edmonds, in the *Official History of the War*, adds: 'We may for the moment agree with him.' Historians and military experts are still debating the question.

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captured another. The Bays had no casualties either from British shells or German bullets, and with the Marne safely crossed, they felt they had had a good day when at last they reached their billets at Lucy-le-Bocage in the undulating wooded country west of Château Thierry.

Reports were now current that the Germans had suffered a decisive defeat. Sir John French's orders that evening gave as the general direction for next day: 'The Army will continue the pursuit northwards to-morrow at 5 a.m., and attack the enemy wherever he is met.'

The Bays marched at 4.30 a.m. The first point to be reached was indicated as the high ground near Bonnes, 7 miles north-west of Château Thierry, where General Allenby was concentrating the Cavalry Division on the right front of the British advance. It was a dull morning, with mist and heavy, low-lying clouds that barred all aerial reconnaissance – the kind of day when the cavalry are the only eyes of an advancing army. The ground was soaked with the heavy rain that had followed the thunderstorm of the day before.

On reaching the heights near Bonnes there was again touch with a German rear-guard. Artillery began shelling from near Latilly, a village 2 miles away to the north, and there were some casualties in the 11th Hussars. The 5th Dragoon Guards reconnoitred the village and found it held by a force of German cyclists and cavalry. These, however, retired from Latilly, with their supporting guns, when the rest of the 1st Cavalry Brigade went forward with Z Battery.[1]

Moving forward again, still northwards towards the crossings of the river Ourcq, the Bays, between 11 a.m. and

[1]This was a battery improvised by taking sections from other batteries to replace 'L' after its destruction at Néry. 'Z' was with the 1st Cavalry Brigade until September 28.

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noon, reached another rising ground from which there came in sight a huge enemy convoy of some 500 waggons, moving towards the river-crossing north of La Croix. It had a strong escort, estimated at five cavalry regiments, two batteries and a couple of hundred cyclists. Here was a tempting prize for the 1st Cavalry Brigade. But the rear of the long column was already some 2 miles away. Z Battery was brought into action, but the ground was a sodden bog after the rain, and hoof and wheel sank in the mud, so that there was some delay in getting into position and opening fire. The German batteries promptly replied. They proved to be howitzer batteries, of longer range than our guns. They found their target at once. As Captain Hall puts it: 'The way in which the heavy German "hows" got the position and range of the Battery was a very fine bit of artillery work, though most discommoding to all in the vicinity. Those guns were at least 5·9's.' Up against heavier metal, at a range at which it could not reach the enemy's guns, Z Battery was silenced in twenty minutes. A French column of D'Espérey's army was not far off to our right, flanked by Conneau's Cavalry. Attracted by the sound of the firing, a battery of their 75's rushed up and opened fire, but 'the Germans absolutely plastered them,' silencing them in about the same time. The convoy was meanwhile moving steadily out of reach, and seemed likely to escape. But now round a corner came a column of some sixty motor-lorries and Paris omnibuses packed with French infantry, which had been working in support of Conneau's Cavalry. These followed up the convoy, a cavalry division took it in flank farther on, and our Allies captured most of its waggons. The Bays got this good news after they reached their billets – comfortable quarters in the village of Breny on the Ourcq.

On the 11th the general advance of the British Army

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was north-eastward across the upper Ourcq, heading for the crossings of the Vesle, which runs into the Aisne east of Soissons. We may note here something which was only known later. Von Kluck had got his army across the Aisne about Soissons. Von Buelow was retiring across the Vesle, holding each of its crossings with a strong rear-guard. The 1st Cavalry Brigade marched at 4.30 a.m. The Regiment had a trying march, for one of Conneau's columns was moving by the same road in the earlier part of the day, and more than once French cavalry, motor-lorries and buses full of infantry, with trains of transport, blocked the way. The village of Branges was reached in the afternoon, and under a downpour of rain the Bays were sent forward to reconnoitre towards the Vesle as far as the hamlet of Cuiry Housse, but did not come in touch with the enemy. That night the Regiment billeted at Branges, 'a horrible hole, beastly dirty.'

Sir John French's orders, written that evening, directed that the pursuit was to be continued, covered by the cavalry, and the crossings of the Aisne east of Soissons were to be seized. Indeed, the orders to his left column (3rd Corps) were even more optimistic, directing it to reach a point north of the river, on the heights beyond. The resistance offered by the German rear-guards prevented this programme from being completely accomplished, but good progress was made.

Saturday, September 12, was a dull, cloudy day, with many rain showers. The Bays marched from Branges at 4.30 a.m., acting as the advanced regiment of the 1st Cavalry Brigade, whose orders were to cross the Vesle at the village of Braisne and occupy the heights beyond overlooking the Aisne valley.

Braisne was strongly held. It stands at a loop of the river, mostly on the south side. It had to be cleared of the

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enemy to reach and seize the crossing, and this took some hours of hard fighting. But when C Squadron (Captain Pinching), acting as advanced guard, came in sight of the place about 11 a.m., it looked like a deserted village, with no one stirring, in as far as they could see with their glasses. On moving closer downhill, the advanced troop, under Lieutenant F. D. R. Milne, saw what looked like a barricade before the entrance of the village, but still could discover no sign of life. They cautiously approached the barricade. When they were only some 50 yards from it, a hot fire was opened upon them. Milne's horse was killed and there were several casualties. Those not hit galloped to cover farther up the steep slope, where they dismounted and got into action. The rest of the squadron had now come up, and the attack began. C Squadron in the firing-line was at once reinforced by A (under Captain Springfield), while B Squadron (Captain Stone) was sent round to the left to push for the western side of the place – all three squadrons being dismounted. Z Battery came into action on a crest well out to the left rear of the advance, checking by its fire German reinforcements which were seen coming down the slope beyond the river.

The enemy were driven from their barricade and a railway-crossing just outside the village, and fell back into the place, followed up by the converging attacks of the Bays. There was some hard fighting from house to house. The village was full of snipers, but it was cleared systematically, and it was a fine piece of work. In this street-fighting, amongst other losses, Captain Springfield was killed – one of the most popular officers of the Regiment. Captain Pinching was wounded. By 3 p.m. the village was all in our hands, with some 200 prisoners, and one of the bridges over the river was secured and found undamaged. An infantry brigade came up at the end of the fight, and its long-range

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rifle-fire accounted for some of the enemy retiring up the slopes of the north bank. A curious feature of the action was that the Germans had left their rear-guard without any artillery support.

In his Third Dispatch, describing the battle of the Aisne, Sir John French dealt with the passage of the Vesle as its prelude, and specially mentioned the Bays for their good work in the capture of Braisne.

Pushing on from the river-crossing, the Regiment reached Dhuizel on the heights overlooking the Aisne valley, where the night was passed. Away towards Soissons, on the extreme left, the advance guard of the 3rd Corps had seized and crossed the partly ruined bridge of Venizel on the river, but along the rest of the line the infantry columns were still a mile or two from it on all the roads. It was the eve of the battle of the Aisne. Sir John French's orders for the 13th directed the crossing of the river and the continuance of the pursuit beyond it. But on the heights of the north bank the enemy was preparing not to fight further rear-guard actions, but to make a determined stand.

The first phase of the war was over. The long period of trench warfare was soon to begin.

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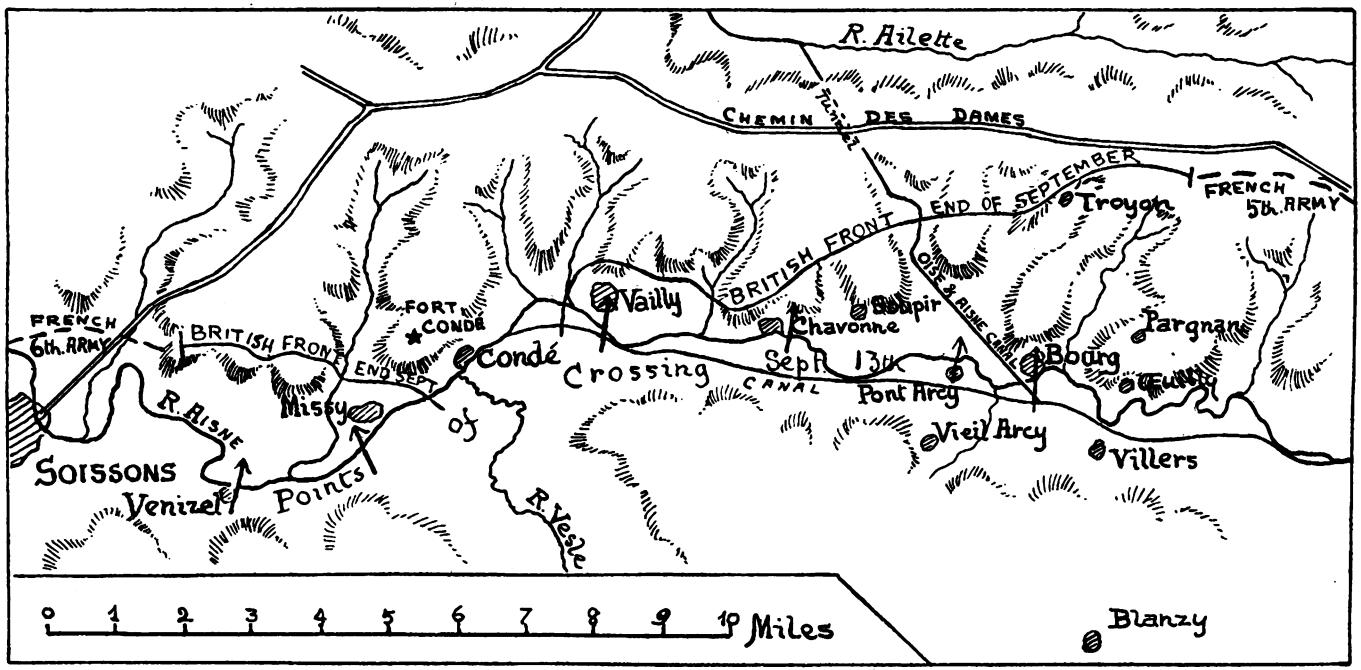

Ch. XVI. 12

— Battle of the Aisne. —

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CHAPTER XVI

The Battle of the Aisne

The official historian of the war has been able to describe in detail the first event of its second phase – the battle of the Aisne – without making more than a single casual reference to the Queen's Bays; but if the Regiment's share in the actual fighting was relatively insignificant, the events of these three fateful weeks – September 13 – October 4 – stand out interestingly in its annals. The regimental diary and the private journals available offer us some glimpses into the great conflict. We shall reproduce some of them presently. To get any general impression, however, of the battle as a whole, we must fall back upon the narratives of other eye-witnesses and historians. Let us begin by looking at the scene through the eyes of the British Commander-in-Chief:[1]

'The Aisne valley runs generally east and west, and consists of a flat-bottomed depression, of width varying from half a mile to two miles, down which the river follows a winding course to the west, at some points near the southern slopes of the valley and at others near the northern. The high ground both on the north and south of the river is approximately 400 feet above the bottom of the valley itself, which is broken into numerous rounded spurs and re-entrants. The most prominent of the former are the Chivres spur on the right bank and the Sermoise spur on the left.

'Near the latter place the general plateau on the south is divided by a subsidiary valley of much the same character,

[1] *1914*, by Field-Marshal Viscount French of Ypres, 1919.

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down which the small river Vesle flows to the main stream near Sermoise. The slopes of the plateau overlooking the Aisne on the north and south are of varying steepness and are covered with numerous patches of wood, which also stretch upwards and backwards over the edge on to the top of the high ground. There are several small towns and villages dotted about in the valley itself and along its sides, the chief of which is the town of Soissons.

'The Aisne is a sluggish stream of some 170 feet in breadth, but being 15 feet in the centre it is unfordable. Between Soissons on the west and Villers on the east (the part of the river attacked and secured by the British forces), there are eleven road bridges across it. On the north bank a narrow-gauge railway runs from Soissons to Veilly, where it crosses the river and continues eastward along the south bank. From Soissons to Sermoise a double line of railway runs along the south bank, turning at the latter place up the Vesle valley towards Bazoches.

'The position held by the enemy was a very strong one either for a delaying action or for a defensive battle. One of its chief characteristics is that, from the high ground, on neither side can the top of the plateau on the other side be seen, except for small stretches. This is chiefly due to the woods on the edges of the slopes. Another important point is that all the bridges are under direct or high-angle artillery-fire. . . .'[1]

[1]It is interesting to compare with this the following remarks by General Von Kluck: 'The northern bank of the Aisne is very broken and abrupt, the southern bank scarcely less so. The steep, continuous and well-wooded slopes permitted only a limited and inadequate field of fire on to the enemy's side, a further handicap being the difficulties of observation still prevailing at that time of year. In many places, therefore, the corps abandoned any idea of keeping the Aisne under direct infantry fire, and withdrew to positions on the plateau farther north where an extensive field of fire was obtainable.'

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Mr. John Buchan's description of the battlefield will complete the picture for us:[1]

'The Aisne . . . has on its north side, at an average of a mile or more from the stream, a line of steep ridges, the scarp of a great plateau. The valley floor is like much other French scenery – a sluggish stream some 50 yards wide, villages, farmhouses, unfenced fields of crops, poplar-lined roads, and a few little towns, the chief of which is Soissons, with its twelfth-century cathedral, the scene of many great doings in France's history. On the north the hills stand like a wall, and the spurs dip down sharply to the vale, while between them the short and rapid brooks have cut steep re-entrant combes in the plateau's edge. The height of the scarp varies from some 200 feet, where the uplands begin on the west above Compiègne from the Forest of Laigue, to more than 450 feet thirty miles east, in the high bluffs of Craonne.'

Craonne was the objective of the French forces on our right. Beyond it, Mr. Buchan continues, 'the Aisne takes a wide sweep to the north-east towards its source in the Argonne, and the banks fall to the lower level characteristic of the shallow dales of Champagne. The section from Compiègne to Craonne is everywhere of the same type, with sometimes a bolder spur and sometimes a deeper ravine. The top of the plateau cannot be seen from the valley nor even from the high ground to the south. It is muffled everywhere by a cloak of woods which dip over the edge and descend for some distance towards the river. The lower slopes are for the most part steep and grassy, with here and there enclosed coppices. The plateau stretches back for some miles, till at La Fère and Laon it breaks into the plains of north-eastern France.'

[1] *A History of the Great War*, by John Buchan, vol. i.

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Mr. Buchan proceeds thus to describe the German position:

'The German armies had chosen for their stand, not the line of the Aisne, but the crest of the plateau beyond it, at an average of 2 miles from the stream-side. The place had once been used before as a defensive position by an invader – by Blücher in February and March 1814 – and the study of that campaign may have suggested the idea to the German Staff. A more perfect position could not be found. It commanded all the crossings of the river and most of the roads on the south bank, and even if the Allies reached the north side the out-jutting spurs gave excellent opportunities for an enfilading fire. The blindness of the crests made it almost impossible for the German trenches to be detected. Eastwards towards Neufchâtel, where the Aisne valley changed its character, the line crossed the river, and followed in a wide curve the course of the Suippe, keeping several miles back from the stream on the northern slopes. Here the position was still stronger. Before them they had a natural glacis, and across the river they could command the bare swelling downs for miles. The line crossed the Champagne-Pouilleuse, with the Bazancourt-Grand-Pré railway behind it, and rested on the Argonne, to the east of which the army of the Imperial Crown Prince was ringing Verdun on north and east from Montfaucon to the shaggy folds of the Woëvre.'

Mr. Buchan in these lines has directed our gaze eastwards, beyond the field of action of the British. Another observer, Lieut.-Colonel A. Rawlinson, enables us to visualise the battle-line in the other direction, westwards of Soissons. On the evening of the 13th, Colonel Rawlinson, at that period of the war a volunteer motor-driver (one of a group of 'owner-drivers' associated with the Royal Auto-

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mobile Club) was approaching Soissons in his car, charged with a communication to the French General from British Headquarters at Fère-en-Tardenois. He had driven along the northern edge of the high lands which there dominate the valley of the Seine:

'To the left' (he writes), 'the heights west of Soissons were visible for at least 10 miles. Everywhere throughout the extensive stretch of country which lay dimly visible in the half-light of the evening innumerable shells were to be seen bursting, appearing like showers of sparks in the gathering darkness. The most thrilling sight of all, however, was afforded by the countless fires which were blazing brightly in every direction. Every farm was burning; and every cottage, however humble, had become a torch to illuminate that terrible scene of bloodshed. I remember even now the thought that sprang to my mind as I gazed on that awful holocaust – namely, that here was certainly "the very mouth of Hell," for no other words could adequately describe that inferno of fire and destruction.'

On September 13 the British front extended from Soissons on the west, through Missy and Vailly, to Bourg on the east. The 1st Corps took up its position between Bourg and Vailly, the 2nd was in the region of Vailly and Missy, the 3rd (Pulteney's), on the eastern outskirts of Soissons. Only Haig's Corps had progressed far beyond the river, but all three had forced a crossing, thanks to the splendid work of the engineers. Hardly enough has been said in most of the war histories about what the engineers achieved on this occasion. One is glad to reproduce Conan Doyle's generous tribute to them. It should be remembered that the Germans had completely destroyed all the bridges along this reach of the river, with two exceptions – an aqueduct bridge near Bourg and a bridge near Soissons,

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of which just one girder remained.[1] 'The more one considers the operation of the crossing of the Aisne,' writes Sir A. Conan Doyle in the first volume of his *History of the War*, 'the more one is impressed by the extraordinary difficulty of the task, the swift debonair way in which it was tackled, and the pushful audacity of the various commanders in gaining a foothold upon the farther side. Consider that upon the 12th the Army was faced by a deep, broad, unfordable river with only one practicable bridge in the fifteen miles opposite them. They had a formidable enemy armed with powerful artillery standing on the defensive, upon a line of uplands commanding every crossing and approach, whilst the valley was so broad that ordinary guns upon the corresponding uplands could have no effect, and good positions lower down were hard to find. There was the problem. And yet upon the 14th the bulk of the Army was across and had established itself in positions from which it could never afterwards be driven. All arms must have worked well to bring about such a result, but what can be said of the Royal Engineers who built under heavy fire in that brief space nine bridges, some of them capable of taking heavy traffic, while they restored five of the bridges which the enemy had destroyed. September 13, 1914, should be recorded in their annals as a marvellous example of personal self-sacrifice and technical proficiency.'

. . . . . .

Before dawn on September 14 the situation of the British Army had been as follows:[2]

[1]The passage of this mere fragment of a bridge by the Zouaves would seem to have been one of the outstanding feats of heroism that marked the battle. Lieut.-Colonel Rawlinson gives a vivid and thrilling account of it in his book, already cited.

[2]*Military Operations*, vol. i.

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North Bank of Aisne

Cavalry Division 1st Division 5th Infantry Bigade	Between Paissy and Verneuil.

(*Gap of 5 miles*)

8th and 9th Infantry Brigades	Vauxelles.

(*Gap of 3 miles*)

1st West Kent and 2nd K.O.S.B. of the 13th Infantry Brigade	Missy.
14th and 15th Infantry Brigade, 4th Division	Ste. Marguerite to Crouy.

South Bank of Aisne

4th (Guards) and 6th Infantry Brigades	Vieil Arcy, Dhuizel, St. Mard.
3rd and 5th Cavalry Brigades 7th Infantry Brigade	Braisne and vicinity.
13th Infantry Brigade (less two battalions)	South of Missy.

Both flanks of the British were in close touch with the French. The 18th Corps of the French Fifth Army, in touch with the British 1st Corps, was attacking towards Craonne with some encouraging success. On our left, the French were experiencing the same difficulties as our troops – they were outranged by the German guns. Maunoury's cavalry, however, was moving north-east, to threaten the German communications. The general prospects were not bright, but Sir John French, taking it 'that the

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Germans might still be in retreat and there might be nothing before him except obstinate and skilfully posted rear-guards,' decided to persist in the 'pursuit,' attacking along the whole front that day.

We cannot do better at this point than cite Brigadier-General Edmond's summary of what followed. He begins by pointing out that very great confusion reigned throughout the day, 'in consequence of thick weather, of the fighting being at close quarters, sometimes even hand-to-hand, and of the heavy casualties.' He proceeds:

'It was most difficult for divisional and brigade staffs, even for battalion commanders, to follow all the vicissitudes of the combat, and almost impossible to record them in detail. Even could they have done so, their accounts could scarcely have done justice to the desperate character of the encounter on the Chemin des Dames ridge near the Chivres spur. The fighting resembled that of Waterloo or Inkerman, except that the combatants instead of being shoulder to shoulder, controlled by their officers, advanced in open order and in small parties, and fought usually behind cover or lying down; there was little of a spectacular nature except when the enemy tried to bear down all opposition by weight of numbers.

'To epitomise the day's work – the British divisions came piecemeal on to the battlefield to the support of the advance guards already across the Aisne. They found the enemy not only in position, entrenched and supported by 8-inch howitzers, but in such force that so far from manifesting any intention of continuing the retreat, he made every effort to drive the British back over the river. Thus the 14th September passed in alternate attack and counter-attack and ended in no decisive result. It was the first day of that "stabilisation" of the battle-line that was to last so

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many weary months – the beginning, as it turned out, of trench warfare.'

To come now to the experiences of the Regiment.

On the morning of September 13, General Briggs's Brigade, after concentrating at Vieil-Arcy, just south of Pont Arcy, near Bourg, advanced across the river to high ground near Pargnan, where they were on the extreme British right. They could see Haig's Division winning its way up the heights by Troyon and the Chemin des Dames, and on their own right the French Fifth Army, including the Morocco Division, pressing forward from the crossings of the Aisne farther east. To the Regiment things seemed that day to be going fairly well. 'We watched the fighting and some tremendous shelling by the French and our own guns,' Colonel Wilberforce records in his diary. 'We were then withdrawn across the river to Vieil Arcy,' he goes on, 'where we arrived late and spent a rotten night, though I was comfortable behind a haystack.'

On the following morning, September 14, the Regiment again crossed the river and returned to Pargnan with a view to helping the infantry, who were on this day to carry out a big attack on the Chemin des Dames. Again the Queen's Bays had a wonderful view of the very heavy fighting which ensued, and shortly after one o'clock the Regiment received urgent orders to move westward along the river to reinforce the left of the 4th Guards Brigade[1] whose flank had been exposed by the repulse of troops of 2nd Corps to the left of Chavonne. B and C Squadrons immediately went into the line, while A Squadron remained at the Château at Soupir.

This Château (the property of Mme Calmette, whose

[1] 'These fine troops,' Major Hall notes, 'seemed quite happy over the situation, although they had been fighting continuously for three days, and had been marching for two whole days before that.'

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husband, the well-known editor of the *Figaro*, was shot in 1913 by Mme Caillaux, wife of the famous statesman), was to be General Briggs's headquarters during the next few days. The grounds were beautiful – 'a fairy lake, covered with pond lilies and lined with a rare rockery, was tucked away in a bower of trees. The clear, cool water provided a refreshing bath.'[1] All the outbuildings, stables, etc., of the Château were full of wounded, for whom there was at the time a great lack of medical comforts, etc., and the kitchen of the Château itself was turned into a makeshift operating theatre.

The 15th was a day of German attack on our troops, successfully repelled on the whole. Sir John French's operation orders for the 16th ordered the line held by the Army to be 'strongly entrenched,' but announced at the same time his intention 'to assume a general offensive at the first opportunity.'

The events of that day, however, were to open his eyes to the real state of affairs, and he began to realise that the opposing armies had reached a condition of stalemate, with this in favour of the Germans that they were very much more advanced in their knowledge of trench warfare than either the British or the French, and that they were far better equipped with the necessary utensils. In fact, the only engineer stores that reached our forces on the Aisne, beyond what the Engineer Companies and bridging trains carried, were small quantities of barbed wire and sandbags, 'and the only heavy artillery that arrived (apart from the 60-pounders which formed part of the divisional artillery) were four batteries of old-pattern 6-inch howitzers.'[2]

The 15th, then, may be regarded as the first day of trench warfare.

In a subsequent chapter we shall have a picture of

[1] Frederic Coleman, *From Mons to Ypres.* [2] *Military Operations*, vol. i.

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trench warfare as seen by an officer of the Queen's Bays, but it may be well at this point to borrow further from the official historian of the war, who thus describes the earliest efforts of the British at digging-in:

'The British could at first do little more than dig cover. Fortunately for them the soil on the slopes of the Aisne valley and on the plateau was easy, and as long as they were in the Aisne district – that is to say, before the first frosts – the sides of the trenches, except in one sector of the 2nd Corps area, stood vertical without revetment; in fact, they stood so well that it was even possible to obtain additional cover by undercutting the sides in South African fashion, thus forming the first "funk holes." The trenches dug at this period were rarely continuous, usually a succession of pits capable of holding a few men. Generally, they were of the narrow type, 18 inches to 2 feet wide, with tiny traverses, 3 to 6 feet wide. These days were afterwards spoken of in jest as the "Augustan Period" (August 1914) of field fortification. The narrow trenches, though giving good cover, proved the graves of some of the defenders, for men were occasionally buried alive in them. In siting fire trenches, when a choice was possible, concealment from the direct observation of hostile artillery became the most important factor; on the slopes of the Aisne valley an extensive field of fire was out of the question, and it soon became evident that a short one, flanked by machine-guns, was in reality more effective.'

The 15th, Tuesday, spent at or near Chavonne in such trenches as here described, was an uneventful day for the Regiment, which bivouacked again at Soupir.

At daybreak on the 16th it returned to Chavonne, but at noon it was relieved. 'We went back to the Château at Soupir,' the Colonel's diary records, 'as general reserve, with a view to off-saddle and rest. We had no sooner off-saddled

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than the shelling began again. Two men on the 11th Hussars were killed and 6 were wounded, so we had to shift our position. Then the "coal-box" began, and everything combined to make it an unpleasant afternoon. The German gunners could see the road, so we remained under cover until dark and then moved to Œuilly.

'A thoroughly trying day – dodging shells quite got on one's nerves. They have much the better of us in position, commanding all our communications and the bridges over the river. No game!'

At 11 p.m. on the 16th the Regiment moved to Œuilly, on the Aisne, just south of Pargnan.

Thursday, the 17th, a particularly wet day, was spent at Œuilly. There was a lull in the firing. 'It is really a positive comfort not to be shelled,' one officer remarks plaintively in his diary. 'I and all the rest of us are sick to death of the incessant artillery-fire.' Another had written on the day before: 'It is most tiring to listen to, and one finds it difficult to rest.'

Of the happenings on the 18th, 19th and 20th, spent either in the trenches near Chavonne or in reserve on the south of the river, there is not much to record. These jottings from the Colonel's diary tell enough:

'*Friday*, 18*th*. – Still at Œuilly in general reserve. Had the horses branded. Remained saddled up, as we were the orderly regiment. Had a hot bath. A beastly day with lots of rain, and the village filthy and very insanitary. Walked up the hill and watched the shelling for a little, and so back to the village and wrote letters. . . .'

'*Saturday*, 19*th*. – The usual night alarms and stand to, etc., but as usual nothing came of it. A beastly night, raining hard. The 5th and 11th went off to Chavonne at daybreak. We remained in reserve, but moved out at

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one o'clock to make room for the 1st Guards Brigade, who had been relieved in the outpost line by the 18th Brigade.

'After crossing the river we found Captains Moncrieff and Sassoon, 6th Dragoons, and Evelyn Fanshawe and Herron,[1] so we are getting up to establishment again in officers – only two short. We eventually bivouacked in Blanzy – quite clean and comfortable. Much colder in the evening.

'*Sunday*, 20*th*.—Left with the Regiment at 5 a.m. for Chavonne to relieve the 11th Hussars. Took over the trenches from the 5th Dragoon Guards as a matter of fact, while they fell back into the reserve and the 11th went to Blanzy.

'The Wilts on our left were heavily attacked and driven back, but the situation was rectified by my getting one gun up to bombard the Germans from the footing they had got on a bluff which enfiladed our trenches. This was completely successful and the Wilts got back into their original trenches. . . .'

This attack on the Wiltshire regiment has been referred to as marked by an instance of German brutality, inasmuch as the enemy drove in front of them some 60 or 100 British prisoners, and thus prevented our own men from firing. Major Hall, who was an eye-witness of this incident, says that it was 'the only attempt' he met with 'during the whole war on the part of the Germans to do an act that might have been called an atrocity.'

An entry in Lamb's diary dealing with the attack may be worth giving here in full:

'*September* 20, *Sunday*. – The Regiment left Blanzy[2] at

[1]Herron and Fanshawe had come straight out from Sandhurst.

[2]At 12.45 on the previous day the Regiment had marched from Œuilly to Blanzy-les-Fismes, where it went into billets about five in the afternoon.

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5 a.m. Marched back *via* Villers and along north bank of the river, so as to avoid shell-fire at "Tattenham Corner"[1] to Chavonne. The Regiment relieved the 11th Hussars in the trenches north-west of Chavonne at 7.30 a.m., C Squadron on the left, A Squadron with the machine-guns in the centre, and B Squadron on the right. The Wiltshire Regiment (right of the Second Army) on our left. Our trench consists of a high bank with steps cut out in it to fire from, and holes dug out all along for the men to shelter in. My machine-guns occupied the extreme left of the trench, and I could only get an indifferent field of fire.

'During the day the Germans attacked the Wiltshire Regiment through the rather dense woods leading up to their trenches. . . . Whilst advancing to the attack the Germans made horrible noises and seemed to be all talking at once. They were also encouraged by the blowing of cheap, tinny-sounding trumpets.'

'Continued wet weather, intermittent bombardment by both sides, steady advance of the German trenches to closer quarters with the British, and almost daily German attacks of a more or less serious nature' were the general characteristics of the five days, September 16–20. On the 20th the rain ceased and fine autumn weather ensued.

Monday the 21st, Tuesday and Wednesday passed uneventfully and almost monotonously. On Thursday, August 24, Colonel Wilberforce notes the news that Lamb had been awarded the D.S.O. and Ellicock the D.C.M., 'both well deserved,' for Néry.

'The weather was fine all this week, Friday and Saturday being "beautiful days."'

On Sunday the 27th, the Colonel writes: 'Same old thing – saddle-up at moment's notice – and we had to go back to Chavonne to take over from the Grenadier

[1] 'Tattenham Corner,' so-called because every one went past it at full gallop.

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Guards. After having gone to all the trouble of marching up the hill, orders came "as you were." Really too troublesome for anything! After waiting some time, we got an order to billet at St. Mard, just across the canal and river. The Regiment got shelled crossing the canal at Cys, but fortunately no one was hit. . . . Our four days' so-called rest ended as one day's rest and three days saddled-up from dawn to dark.'

On that Sunday morning Lamb had had orders to proceed to the Divisional Headquarters at Bourg to meet Sir John French with reference to his D.S.O. On his return he passed two German prisoners, officers, under escort, carrying a large bundle. On inquiry afterwards, he heard that these men had been found concealed in the very middle of a haystack, with plenty of provisions and a telephone apparatus, with which they evidently had been giving away all the British movements, as the haystack was right in the centre of our lines. The wire used with these telephones was very fine and almost invisible a few yards off.

This capture explained what had been a bit of a mystery, namely, the fact that whenever proceeding down the Chavonne Soupir Road our men were always shelled directly they moved.

On the 25th and 26th there were considerable German offensives. But on the 27th the Germans confined themselves to artillery-fire until dusk, when 'somewhat feeble attacks upon the 2nd and 3rd Infantry Brigades were renewed and easily repulsed.' From this day forth, as the *Official History* puts it, offensive operations on the British front ceased, the positions of the opposing forces remaining practically the same as on September 14.

In Lamb's entry for September 29 we find another allusion to 'coal-boxes' – that term had already come into

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general use on the front. 'We hear,' he writes, 'that "coal-boxes" have been dropping in and around Longueval. . . . They are, I hear, tremendously powerful howitzers that fire them, about 9-inch calibre or more. The hole that the shell makes on bursting is big enough to bury a horse and cart in, and the noise is terrific. A rotten death to die, being killed by the shell from a gun probably eight miles or more away, when sitting comfortably in billets!'

On the 30th, Lamb records the arrival of Lieutenant Single from Aldershot 'and four other officers – Kemmis (Inniskillings), Davidson (2nd Indian Lancers), Sartorius (6th Bengal Cavalry) and Robertson (Jacob's Horse) – making us four above establishment.'

He proceeds to express the opinion that there is 'very little balance in favour of either side in this battle up to now. If anything, the Allies have moved forward slightly.'

Thursday, October 31, is notable chiefly for unusually palatable fare and for a game of rounders. 'Strawberries – apples and cream – goose – for dinner. Very good!!!' is Lieutenant Newton's quite emotional entry for that day.[1] Rounders would seem to have been a favourite pastime this week. On the 26th, also, there had been a game which 'seemed to interest greatly a German circling above.'

On Friday, October 2, Colonel Wilberforce notes: 'Brigade Orders gave French honours to-night. Self, Croix d'Officier; Heydeman and Lamb, Croix de Chevalier; and Corporal Short, Médaille Militaire.'

Saturday, October 3, found the Regiment at Courcelles, 'where 1st Corps Headquarters were, so we hadn't much billeting room,' the Colonel remarks.

[1]Wednesday, October 30, had been another red-letter day for Newton and some of his comrades. 'L, the interpreter, brought out a large flagon of red wine given me by a French Colonel of Army Service Corps!!!' he notes in his *Diary*. 'Great joy! Woman wheeled it up the hill for us!!!'

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The battle of the Aisne, although neither Colonel Wilberforce nor any of his officers as yet suspected it, was over. The conflict was almost reaching its last gasp simply from lack of munitions on both sides. 'The expenditure of gun ammunition had been so enormous,' Brigadier-General Edmonds says,[1] 'and had so far exceeded the calculations of the most far-seeing, that the British Commander-in-Chief had been for some days anxious as to the supply of shells for his heavy artillery; but on the 28th it was noticed that twelve German shells which fell among the 9th Infantry Brigade failed to burst, and by the 6th October the proportion of "blinds" fired by the German batteries had risen to one in two.' General von Buelow and General von Falkenheyn have given testimony to this. 'By the evening of the 19th,' the former writes, 'the fighting on both sides was almost at an end; Headquarters drew attention once again to the need of the utmost economy of munitions.'[2] Falkenheyn is equally emphatic. Already on September 22 he says that a lack of munitions had made itself felt. 'The German army had entered upon the war well equipped according to ideas that had reigned hitherto. The consumption had, however, exceeded pre-war estimates several times over, and it continues to increase, despite the severe methods which have been adopted to prevent waste.'

Finally, we have the evidence of Marshal Joffre as regards the French. On September 24 he was obliged to issue the following warning: 'If the consumption continues at the present rate it will be impossible to continue the war, owing to lack of munitions.' And he emphasised the situation still more strongly three days later, with the words: '*On ne passera à l'offensive que sur mon ordre.*'

[1] *Military Operations*, vol. i.

[2] It is noteworthy, however, that while this economy was practised on the Aisne front, the Germans continued to bombard Rheims.

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At the same time there had been a complete change in the general situation. As the German resistance on the Aisne stiffened, the French had attempted to turn the strong enemy position by a move round its right flank west of Soissons and up the Oise valley. The Germans held them with forces hurried from other parts of the front. The French then extended their line northwards only to find the enemy was also extending his new front to bar their advance. The Germans were active in Flanders. Antwerp fell, and enemy forces, following up the Belgian retreat, came pouring towards Lille, West Flanders and the Channel ports. The dangerous gap between the prolonged French left and the Belgians (with the Allied forces sent to their help), had to be closed.

The emergency was met by relieving the British on the Aisne front with French troops, and transferring the British Expeditionary Force to the extreme left. This had the further advantage of giving our little army a shorter line of supply and reinforcement from the Channel ports.

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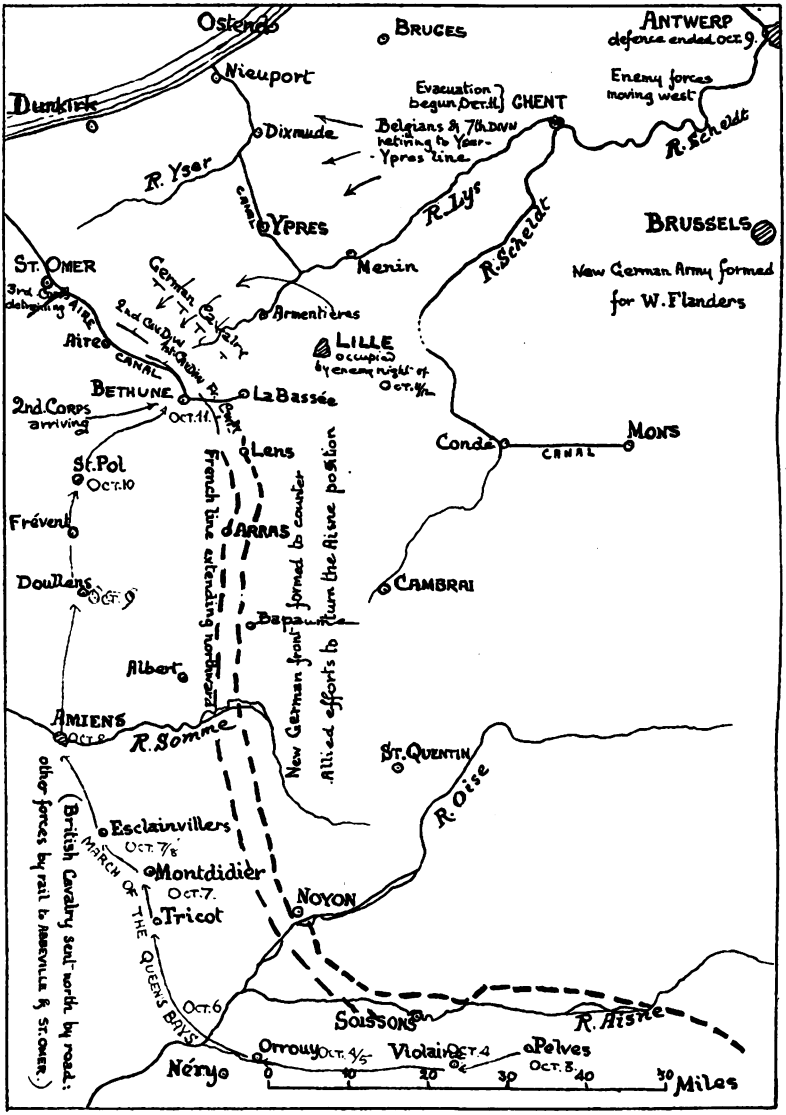

Ch. XVII.

13

The Move to Flanders — Northward March of the Queen's Bays (Oct. 3-11) & general situation when they reached the Flanders Front.

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CHAPTER XVII

The Move to Flanders and the First Battle of Ypres, October–November 1914

The relief of the British troops on the Aisne by the French began on October 3. The purpose of the new move had been kept secret. 'Nobody yet knows what we are here for,' writes Lamb in his journal on that day at Courcelles, where the Regiment was in billets, 'but it is suggested that we left Perles to make room for infantry ammunition columns or field ambulances. We all believe that shortly we shall be moved round to the extreme left flank. We hear that one of our Infantry Divisions and the 2nd Cavalry Division have been sent secretly north to Lille.' 'A cloudy day,' he adds, 'but no rain.' The weather was changing. Days of bright warm sunshine and lovely moonlight nights were to follow.

The Regiment resumed at 6 p.m., October 4, the march north-westwards to Belgium, and arrived at one o'clock the following morning at Violaines, where it bivouacked, proceeding that night to Orrouy, which is about 6 miles east of Néry. Headquarters and the officers of A Squadron spent the night in the Château D'Orrouy, owned by Comte Doria. Lamb and some others slept in a room 'containing tapestry more valuable than the house itself.'

Next day, the 5th, the Colonel, Labouchère and Lamb visited Néry, and the latter took photographs of the graves in which Lieutenant C. de Crespigny, two L Battery officers, Brigadier-Major Cawley, and 14 men and a Uhlan under-officer were buried.

The route continued on the 6th and 7th *via* Francières, Hemevilliers, Tricot and Rubécourt, to Montdidier, where

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a good deal of shell-firing was heard. It seemed that the French, who were advancing on Roye, were getting rather a hard time. On this occasion, as on several others during the march, the vicinity of British troops had an obviously good effect upon the French. The Regiment remained near Montdidier until 5 p.m., when the French position was easier. It then marched to billets at Esclainvilliers, a distance of about 7 miles. Starting at 10.15 a.m. on the 8th, it proceeded to Amiens. The streets of the town were still placarded with various German notices and instructions to the inhabitants. The Bays stopped that night at a village 6 miles north of Amiens called Vaux-en-Amiénoise.[1] They were now in the open plateau country of the Somme. Thence, passing Doullens, they marched to Beauvoir on the 9th.

Passing St. Pol on the 10th, they halted at Frévent, whence they marched on through Maismil, Foufflin-Ricametz, Rœllecourt, St. Michel, Grand-Camp, Ostreville and Rouvelin to La Comte, where they went into billets. Distance about 25 miles.

Lamb notes in his diary for this day: 'At 7.30 p.m. a lot of new horses came to join the Regiment, and I got some new draught-horses to replace those that I had borrowed from the artillery and our Echelon "B" (2nd Line transport).'

On October 11 the march continued *viâ* Houdain, Bruay – a big pit village – Gosnay, Annezin – a suburb of Bethune – Vendin and Oblinghem, where they got into touch with French cavalry, who reported that the Germans were close by. The rest of that day they spent preparing to hold the line of the Aire Canal in the vicinity of Hinges,

[1] 'To-night,' Lamb notes in his diary for the 8th, 'with great difficulty we procured three bottles of Clicquot, and my health was drunk by the headquarters officers in honour of my D.S.O. The Colonel will be the next to stand champagne for his Legion of Honour, Croix d'Officier, and then I come again for my Croix de Chevalier. The Germans have not left very much champagne in this country.'

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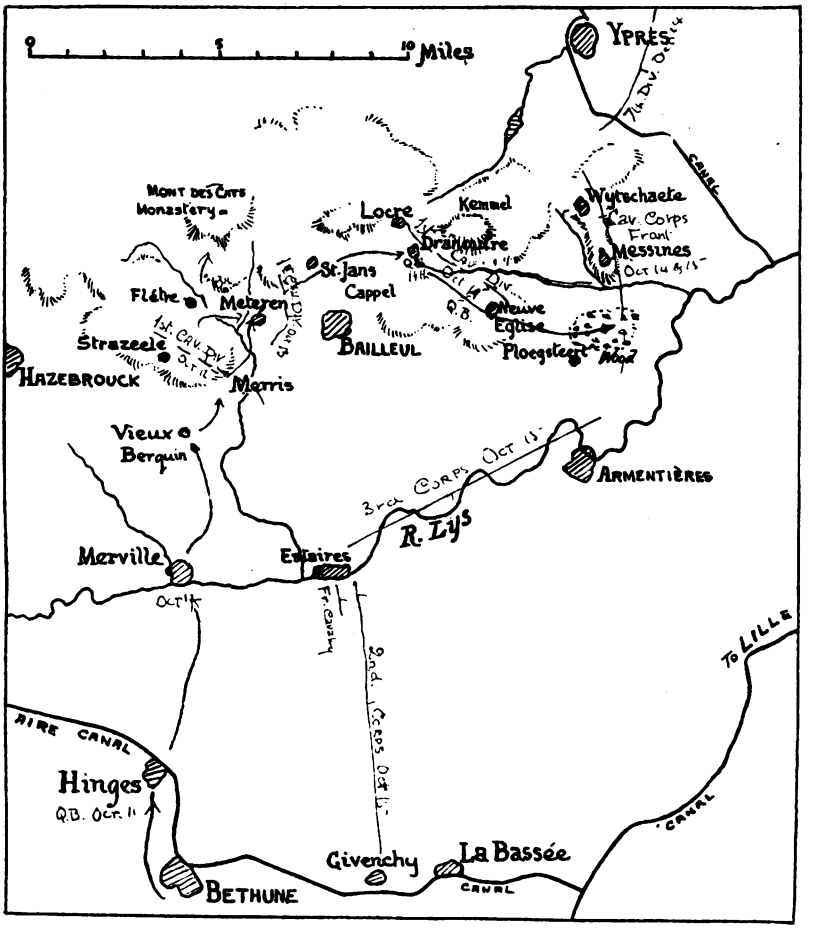

Ch VII.

14 — The Advance to the Ypres Front. —

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and Kingstone's troop being sent to the bridge at that place had quite an active little battle with some French Cuirassiers, who did not know who the British were or what they were doing. The Bays proceeded to Merville that night, passing General Allenby's Divisional Headquarters; Allenby had come into contact with the Germans on the Béthune-Aire Canal, had pushed them back and had occupied Hazebrouck. They bivouacked in the streets and central square of Merville. French cavalry and cyclists were defending the outskirts of the town and were in touch with German cavalry corps. 'One of our patrols, under Lieutenant Sartorius, had a brush with a Uhlan patrol,' the Regimental Diary records, 'killing one and wounding another. Two men also of our own wounded in fog by Germans.'

Shortly before leaving the outskirts of Merville on the morning of the 12th, the leading men of B Squadron came in contact with some German cavalry, and one of our men was slightly wounded in the back. The weather was foggy and the Regiment got no farther than Vieux Berquin. The town was being heavily shelled. In the course of the day Kingstone laid a trap for some German cyclists just outside the town on the road to Merris. Three were killed. The country round Vieux-Berquin is very flat and the only observation that could be obtained was from the tops of churches. 'There are small bodies of German cavalry all round here,' Lamb writes in his diary for October 12, 'and it is very difficult to know which is one's front or anything about the situation.'

On the following morning, October 13, the Regiment moved north through Flêtre towards Meteren. The Germans had machine-guns in the church tower of the little village, and A Squadron, who were leading, had several men wounded by shell-fire. Trumpeter Webb was killed. About 1 p.m. they reached the ridge running north from Meteren to the

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Mont des Cats, which was being held by the Prince Max of Hesse and his regiment, the Hessian Dragoons. The place was to be stormed and taken that afternoon by the 16th Lancers, the Prince losing his life.

At about 3 p.m. a Jaeger battalion counter-attacked the Bays from the direction of St. Jans-Cappel, but were driven off with a certain amount of loss. On the 14th the Regiment crossed the Belgian frontier and billeted at Dranoutre,[1] where they remained until 11 p.m. next day.

Now came one of the most remarkable and least pleasant experiences of the campaign – a night march, with a view to seizing Ploegsteert 'if not held.' The name 'Ploegsteert' was then unknown, though it was afterwards to be so familiar.[2] It was pitch dark, there was heavy rain and the road was a cobbled one on which you could hear the horses' hoofs at least 2 miles away. The route was uncertain and so was the position of the enemy. The advance guard proceeded very cautiously on foot, followed at a discreet distance by the rest of the Regiment, all leading their horses. As there was a considerable amount of firing in progress, all were immensely relieved when, as day broke, they found themselves close to their objective, still clear of any enemy occupation. It was generally felt that this night march was a singularly ill-conceived operation. As one of the officers puts it, 'We thought that at any moment we would bump into the German outposts, and quite what

[1] 'Our day in billets at Dranoutre,' writes Captain Kingstone, 'was our first experience at close quarters of the Belgian farmer, and we were not favourably impressed either by him or his womenfolk. "Bunny" Lannowe had a very painful scene with the lady in the farm where we were, because he insisted on letting out the dog, which they made to run in a big wooden wheel to churn the milk. She declared that all her butter had been spoilt, and that she would much rather have the Germans there than the English! However, we all got on better terms with her later in the day.'

[2] This, of course, is the correct spelling, though 'Plug Street' was the colloquial form of it. (Ploegsteert is the Flemish for Plough-tail.)

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we were to do if this happened, mixed up as we were with our led horses – would have been a nice problem for the Higher Command!'

Sunday, October 18, and the two following days were spent uneventfully in or near Ploegsteert Wood.

On the 21st, Colonel Wilberforce was laid up with a sharp attack of muscular rheumatism, and left for Bailleul, whence he proceeded *viâ* Boulogne to London. Major J. A. Browning assumed command.

On one of these days the Headquarters of the Cavalry Division were shelled out of their comfortable billets in a neighbouring château, somewhat to the amusement of regimental officers less luxuriously provided for.

From the 19th to the 29th the Regiment remained on and off in the line round about Messines, and were witnesses of the fighting in progress on what was afterwards to be known to Tommy Atkins as the 'Wipers' salient.

A curious incident occurred one night during this period. Kingstone's troop was holding a barricade on the outskirts of Messines. Some few days previously a newly arrived Indian Infantry Battalion had been brought up to support the Brigade, and had lost almost all their British officers and suffered badly. 'On the night in question,' writes Kingstone, 'at about two o'clock in the morning, I was awakened by Sergeant Barber, who said that there were a party of Indians on the opposite side of the barricade. We therefore went down there and began to address them in what we thought was their own language and also in French, but without much success. We then sent for "Bunny" Lannowe, who was supposed to be able to speak Hindustani, and although he talked a great deal he did not meet with any more success then we had done. He thereupon climbed over the barricade, but had scarcely got right over when there was a fusillade from our supposed Indians, who were

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apparently some Germans trying to pull our legs! This started both sides firing wildly at each other for several miles along the line, both to the right and to the left of us.'

. . . . . .

At this point it may be well for us to detach our eyes from the Regiment and to remind ourselves how things were shaping on the Flanders front generally. What Lord French called 'the First Phase' of the first great battle of Ypres – *i.e.* the fighting between October 15 and October 26, was now over. To cite Lord French's own words, this 'First Phase' had consisted of 'the successive attempts . . . to effect a great turning movement round the German right flank. The operations up to the night of the 26th certainly failed in their original intention of clearing the coast-line and driving the enemy from Bruges and Ghent, but they succeeded in establishing a line to the sea, which, if it could be held, brought the Germans face to face with the challenge: "Thus far shalt thou go and no farther." '[1]

Amplifying this nut-shell summary, and glancing right back to the beginning of October, we may note, with Mr. John Buchan,[2] that the Flanders campaign consisted of three successive strategical plans, all of which miscarried, followed by a successful defensive. In the first days of the month, 'the allied plan, based on the assumption that Antwerp could be saved, was so to extend their left as to hold the line of the Scheldt from Antwerp to Tournai, continuing south-west by Douai to Arras, and, with this as a base, to move against the German communications through Mons and Valenciennes. But by the 6th it was seen that Antwerp must fall, and this plan was replaced by a second. The Belgian army, covered by Rawlinson's British force,[3] could retire by Bruges and Ghent to the line of the

[1] *1914.* [2] *A History of the Great War.*

[3] Which was about to be disembarked at Ostend and Zeebrugge just then.

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Yser to protect the allied left, and meet, along with the new French reinforcements, any coast attack by the German troops released after the fall of Antwerp. Lille and La Bassée must be held by the Allies, and the British, pivoting on the latter place, would swing south-eastward, isolate Beseler's army of Antwerp, and threaten the north-western communications of the vast German front, which now ran from somewhere near Tournai southward to the Aisne heights. In the last resort, if the Allies were forestalled in La Bassée and Lille . . . instead of a frontal attack, an enveloping movement could be attempted from the line of the Lys against the right flank of the main German armies. For this purpose the town of Menin on the Lys, south-east of Ypres, was essential as a pivot.'

The whole of the allied plan, therefore, depended on the German right not being farther north than the neighbourhood of Roubaix. Joffre knew that the German right was rapidly extending. His task was to overlap it. If the strategy of the Allies succeeded, they might be in a position to strike a decisive blow. 'If it failed, then the situation would be no worse. It is true that the extension of the lines to the sea would prevent any attack upon the German communications, which would then be sheltered behind a ring-fence of arms. But on the other hand, it would prevent any German enveloping movement, and pin down the enemy to a slow war of positions; and, since time was on the side of the Allies, he would be driven to a stalemate which would militate disastrously against his ultimate success.'

The Germans knew what Joffre was 'up to,' and were soon busy transferring first-line corps from the southern part of their front to Flanders, and a redistribution of forces was in several respects much easier for them than for the Allies. Newly formed corps, for instance, could travel from Germany by a perfectly straight line through north Belgium;

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they had an entire army released from Antwerp; and 'they had quantities of cavalry, which had been of no use in the Aisne battle, to harass the left flank of the Allied turning movement, and to occupy points of vantage till their infantry came up.' For the Germans as for the Allies it was to be a race to the sea. 'To the Allies' scheme they sought to oppose a counter-offensive which should give them Calais and the Channel ports, and ultimately the Seine valley for an advance to Paris. To succeed, they must be first through the sally-port between La Bassée and the sea. If the British forestalled them, Beseler would be cut off and the German front would be bent round into a square, with the Allies operating against three sides of it. The 40 miles between Lille and Nieuport became suddenly the critical terrain of the war.'

When, at the end of September, the Tenth Army of Maud'huy aligned itself on Castelnau's left, one of its tasks was to be the occupation of Lille. By October 1 it had occupied Arras, and was pushing eastward on the road to Douai, but by the 8th it had been forced back to Arras, and the Germans, who now held Douai and Lens, were closing in on Lille. From now until October 19, all Maud'huy could do was to cling to Arras until relief came from the allied operations on the left, beyond Lens and the Lille-Béthune highway.

On October 11, Smith-Dorrien with the British 2nd Corps marched from Abbeville to the line of the canal between Aire and Béthune. On his right was Conneau's 2nd Cavalry Corps connecting him with Maud'huy, on his left Gough's 2nd Cavalry Division. By the 16th, Smith-Dorrien, unable to achieve the rapid dash which Sir John French had planned for him on La Bassée and Lille, had at least pushed the Germans off the Estaires-La Bassée road.

Meanwhile, the 3rd Corps, under Pulteney, which had

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completed its detrainment at St. Omer on the night of the 11th, had driven the Germans out of Meteren and pushed on to Armentières. Advancing farther on the 17th and 18th, he tried in vain, with the help of Allenby's cavalry corps, to clear the right bank of the Lys. On the 19th, faced by the Germans at all points from Le Gheir to Radighem, Pulteney's force represented the farthest line held by this section of our front. Allenby's cavalry corps on the night of the 19th was generally east of Messines, on a line drawn from Le Gheir to Hollebeke. It was on the same day that the 1st Corps, under Sir Douglas Haig, detrained at St. Omer and marched to Hazebrouck. Lord French had been curiously over-sanguine until the 15th, and even now he under-estimated the strength of the Germans, as we know from the instructions which he gave Haig that evening.

'I explained the situation as clearly as possible,' he tells us, 'and showed him on the map where and how he thought the enemy's troops were distributed. I said that at the moment I did not think there was much more than the 3rd German Reserve Corps, with possibly one or two divisions attached, between Ostend and Menin, but that all reports pointed to an early arrival of strong reinforcements from the centre and east of Belgium. I pointed out to Haig how much importance I attached to the clearing of Ostend and Bruges before these reinforcements could arrive. I said I hoped that with the assistance of the French and Belgian troops on the north, and Rawlinson on his left flank, he would be able to effect this object and perhaps, with luck, throw the enemy back on Ghent. I told him that this was what I particularly wanted to bring about, but he would have to be guided by the course of events.'

The course of events was to prove somewhat different from what French thought probable. In a succinct epitome of the *British Campaigns in the West*, written by Major-

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General Sir Frederick Maurice,[1] these events are very clearly and compactly set forth. Having pointed out that the siege and capture of Antwerp had initiated a new phase of the war, Sir Frederick proceeds:

'In an endeavour to save the great Belgian fortress, the British had, besides reinforcing the Belgian garrison with a naval contingent, disembarked early in October at Ostend and Zeebrugge a force under Sir Henry Rawlinson, composed of the 7th Division, commanded by General Capper, and the 3rd Cavalry Division, commanded by General Byng. Rawlinson was, however, too late to do more than assist in covering the retreat of the Belgian army, and, this accomplished, he moved towards Ypres, on which Sir Douglas Haig was marching with the 1st Corps from St. Omer. The last ten days of October saw a fierce battle raging from the North Sea coast near Nieuport through Dixmude and Ypres, by Wytschaete and La Bassée. Smith-Dorrien's 2nd Corps was driven from Neuve-Chapelle, but stayed the enemy's progress just west of that village, until relieved by the Indian Corps, which had just landed at Marseilles and reached the front at a most opportune moment. Pulteney's 3rd Corps held on to Armentières and the line of the Lys, but Allenby's cavalry, which from Hazebrouck had moved through Messines and Wytschaete, was forced back from the ridge connecting these villages, the important hill of Kemmel to the west of the ridge being saved by the timely arrival of British and French reinforcements.'

This brings us down to the last days of October. It will help us to understand the rôle played by the Queen's Bays during the weeks which followed, if we follow this portion of Sir Frederick Maurice's narrative to the end:

[1]Muirhead's *Belgium* in 'The Blue Guides' series. This excellent epitome is printed also in the volume devoted to *North-Eastern France* in the same series.

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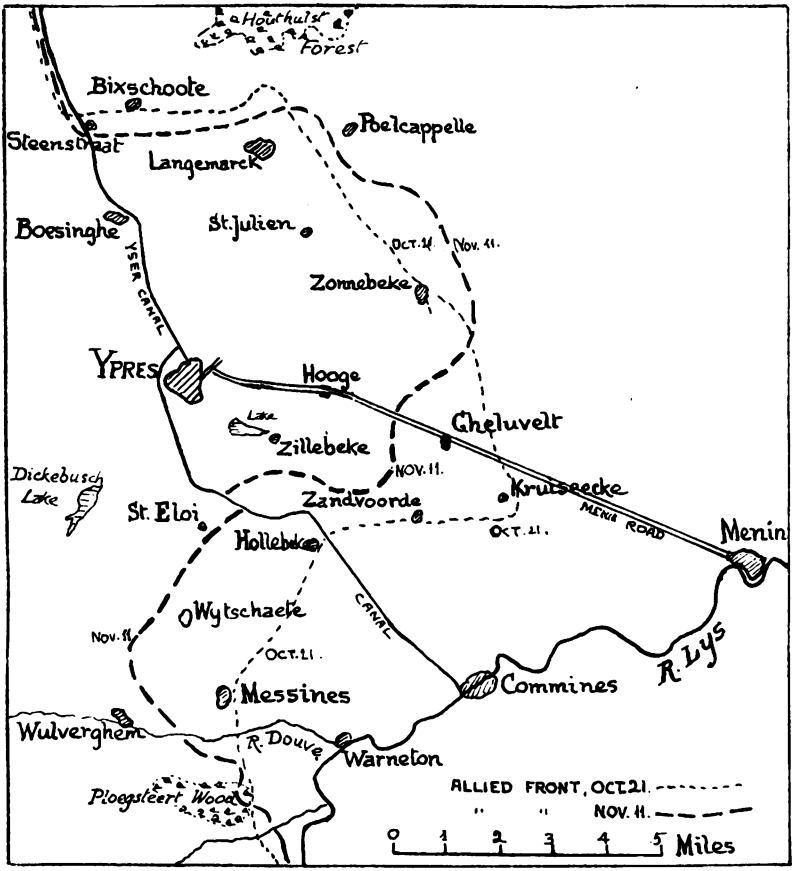

Ch. XVII. 15 — First Battle of Ypres.

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'The loss of the Wytschaete ridge created the notorious salient of Ypres, in which the British troops were destined to suffer so much, for from the north portion of the ridge the enemy's guns were able to fire into the flank and rear of the British positions covering the town. It was round Ypres and farther north along the Franco-Belgian front on the Yser that the fiercest struggle took place. There the enemy made his main effort to break through to Calais, and there his fiercest attacks were broken. The crisis of the battle was reached on October 31, on which day the enemy had all but forced his way through, down the Menin-Ypres road, when a superb counter-attack by the Worcesters re-took the village of Gheluvelt and brought him to a stand. Thereafter Haig's hard-pressed men were reinforced by a portion of Smith-Dorrien's Corps transported from the Neuve-Chapelle front, and the worst of the danger was over.

'But the enemy still kept up incessant attacks which culminated on November 11 in a great attempt by the Prussian Guard to open the road which their comrades had failed to clear. This attack too was shattered, and it proved to be the enemy's last serious effort. The calls of the Eastern Front were too pressing to be long neglected, and the Germans, adopting a strictly defensive policy in the West, transferred every man they could spare to fight the Russians. During the third week in November the British troops in the Ypres salient were relieved by the French, and the campaign of 1914 came to an end. The great German plan of conquest had been defeated, but at heavy cost.'

. . . . . .

Now we come to the very memorable fight round Messines – the biggest thing in which the Bays were to figure during the first year of the war. Lieut.-Colonel Osborne's report on the share they took in it begins thus:

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'The Regiment was instructed to make and hold certain trenches just north of Messines on the night 30–31st. C Squadron, under Major Terrot, were entrenched in advance of B and A Squadrons, the latter being on the Messines-Ypres road.

'About 7 p.m. on October 30th, C Squadron (temporarily under Captain Moncrieff) successfully withstood a strong attack by the enemy. Little firing occurred during the night – one man, however, being killed.

'At 5.45 a.m. on 31st, the enemy strongly attacked again the left flank of C Squadron, who had eventually to withdraw by successive troops from that flank and take up other positions in the rear. Captain Moncrieff was sent back to ask for ammunition and for reinforcements.

'Up to now, C Squadron had about 30 men wounded, including some men from A Squadron. Lieutenant Paul and 3 troop-sergeants were killed, and Lieutenant Milne was wounded.'

At about 10 a.m. the Bays were ordered to retire from the line of the road. Just as they had reached a hedge about a hundred yards to the rear, Major Browning was killed – a very great loss, for he was beloved and trusted by all ranks. He was shot while standing out in the open getting the men to line the hedge and form a firing-line. Major Matthew Lannowe, as next in rank, now assumed command and, in accordance with orders given by Brigadier-General Briggs, led the Regiment back to the road under heavy shell-fire – the German infantry, luckily, making no attempt to push on while the move was in progress.[1] The Regiment held the line all day.

At one point in the fighting, after dusk, B Squadron

[1]My own troop,' Kingstone notes, 'got back into our piece of trench quite all right, and were thankful to find the rum ration which we had accidentally left behind, still untouched!'

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scored heavily over the enemy. A German company suddenly appeared at the far end of a field, some 200 yards away, marching in fours with the officer and a drummer leading them. They were all singing, and they did not appear to know where they were going. They headed for a cowshed opposite B Squadron, and when fired at they all ran towards B Squadron and into the cowshed. No sooner had the last of them got into the shed than the thatch and the hay in the loft were set fire to by B Squadron, with the result that 24 Germans were killed, 18 wounded and 32 taken prisoners. The officer commanding them could not be found, although some time was spent in looking for him.

That is how one B Squadron officer remembers the incident. Captain Milne's recollection of it differs just a little. We may give it in full:

'The calm of the evening was disturbed by a German band playing *Deutschland Über Alles*, and then the charge sounded on the German bugles, and the Germans came through the hedge, advancing slowly in almost close formation, kettle-drummers beating their drums as they advanced.

'Rapid fire was opened on them from the trenches and houses, and great execution was done, the attack breaking up, some of the Bosch retiring and about 50 others taking cover in a barn, the door of which opened into the field. The only door on the roadside of the barn was about 12 feet from the ground, opening into the loft.

'Efforts were made to burn them out by forking hay, saturated with paraffin and lighted, through this door, but they did not succeed, and eventually Lieutenant Sartorious and Sergeant Wallace each crept round a side of the barn and emptied their revolvers into the crowd. This caused the Bosch to shout "Kamerad," and the whole lot surrendered.

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'Lieutenant E. Walker, I believe, has one of the Bosch side-drums which took part in this musical assault.'

It will be interesting to reproduce here the essential passages of the detailed account of the defence of Messines and the ridge by the Queen's Bays as given by Brigadier-General Edmonds in his *Official History of the War*:

'The 1st Cavalry Brigade,' he writes, 'with the 9th Lancers (2nd Cavalry Brigade) and two companies of the 57th Rifles [I.A.] attached, held Messines as a bastion projecting forward from the general line. The 9th Lancers had taken over the defence of the eastern front of the village . . . at 5 p.m. on the previous evening; but although Lieut.-Colonel David Campbell[1] knew the ground, he had only 150 men at his disposal and at least double that number was requisite. On his right were the two Indian companies and on his left the Queen's Bays. The 4th Hussars, after their heavy fighting of the previous day, held the second line of defence in the village itself. The 5th Dragoon Guards were broken up and used partly in support and partly to fill gaps in the line.

'Intermittent shelling from 8-inch howitzers, and constant sniping from riflemen ensconced within a hundred yards of the British trenches went on all night, and there was much sound of movement in the German lines.'

At about 4.30 a.m., while the 57th (Wilde's) Rifles were waiting to be relieved by the 2nd Inniskilling Fusiliers, 'some of the enemy rushed over the Indians and up to the support trench, held by two troops of B Squadron of the 5th Dragoon Guards. A dozen Germans actually jumped into this trench, where they were bayoneted, the remainder being shot down or driven off.' That was the beginning of the battle. Several other such attacks on this south-east side of the village failed. 'As daylight appeared the enemy

[1] O.C. the 9th Lancers.

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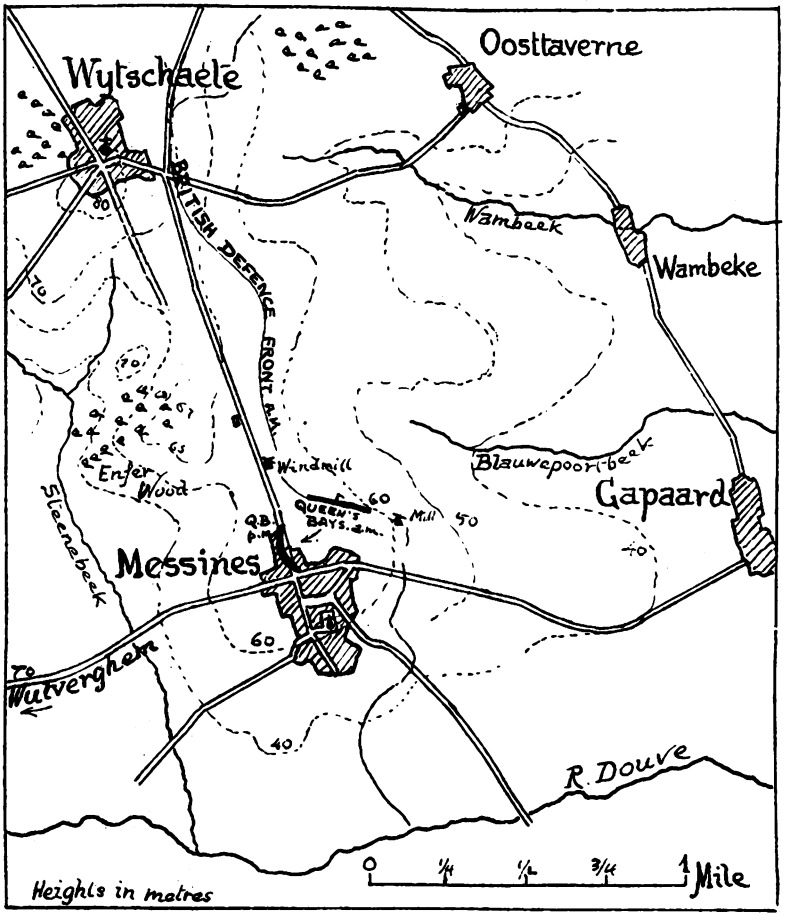

Ch. XVII. (16) — The Fight for Messines. —

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fell back, suffering heavily, not only from rifle and horse-artillery fire, but from the enfilade fire of the 4th Division field-guns on Hill 63 to the south.'

Similar attacks north of Messines were successfully repulsed by the Bays and the 9th Lancers.

'At 8 a.m., as the mist began to thin, German heavy guns and trench-mortars were concentrated on the village, and an hour later the German 26th Division began a formal attack on it.' Ere long it became evident 'that the twelve weak squadrons defending Messines with the support of only I Battery, R.H.A., must soon be annihilated.' Soon after 9 a.m. the 9th Lancers, who had lost 75 per cent. of their officers and 35 per cent. of other ranks, withdrew in good order from the eastern side of Messines to the western outskirts through the line of the 11th Hussars, who were still holding the second position in the village. The line of defence no longer presented a salient. The twelve British squadrons were being attacked by the greater part of twelve German battalions. 'The odds in favour of the enemy were over six to one.'

After a pause of nearly an hour the Germans came on again. By noon our line of defence 'was retired to the main street, a wide one, which lay well within the western side of the village.' Help was forthcoming from the 2nd Corps at Kemmel. North of the Wulverghem-Messines road and north of the village came the 2nd King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, 300 strong; through the southern part of the village came the 2nd King's Own Scottish Borderers, hardly much stronger. Both were in action by about 1 p.m., simultaneously the 2nd Inniskilling Fusiliers counter-attacking vigorously along the line immediately south of the village. Meanwhile, the London Scottish, 750 strong, under Lieut.-Colonel G. A. Malcolm – the first Territorial Force battalion to go into action – had come to the support

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of the 4th Cavalry Brigade between Wytschaete and Messines, and were diverting the attention of the enemy.

The position in Messines was now easier. 'Nevertheless, the situation remained perilous; for at night in village fighting mere numbers count for more than they do in day.' Already the Germans 'were in houses not 50 yards away from the British line; they swept every street with machine-gun fire; and their artillery had set the British part of the village in flames. . . . At nightfall General de Lisle decided to relieve the 1st Cavalry Brigade by the 2nd from the divisional reserve. This operation, in spite of the proximity of the enemy, was successfully carried out after 9 p.m.'

The casualties of the 1st Cavalry Brigade for that day were 25 officers and 169 other ranks. Those of the 9th Lancers were 11 officers and 43 other ranks.

From November 1 to November 24, when the cavalry went into Army Reserve, the Regiment had a strenuous time, interspersed with only occasional short rests. It is a tale of continual movement from one set of trenches to another, and the weather added to the general discomfort by turning wet and cold. The first experience of Flanders' mud called forth forcible language, and few towns can ever have been so consistently cursed as the ancient town of Ypres, in the vicinity of which these moves were made. As one reads through the diaries of officers who were present, one comes continually upon such phrases as 'Marched at very short notice,' 'Dug-in,' 'Heavily shelled,' 'Enemy massing for an attack.' Several casualties occurred and the situation generally was uncomfortable. The cavalry naturally disliked the pedestrian kind of warfare which was imposed upon them, and which now threatened to become a permanency, with their horses kept at a distance in some village or wood.

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THE OFFICERS. FLETRE, 1915

Single Turner Sampson Boag Scott (R.A.M.C.) Cardew
Newton Milne Milnes Thompson Heydeman Barnard Macauley (R.A.V.C.) North
Hall Chance Ing Wilberforce (Commanding) Harman Pinching Sloane
Herron Bushell Walker

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A night march to Ypres was perhaps the most unpleasant experience of the whole period. Kingstone's recollections of it are as follows:

'We had dug some trenches near Wulverghem, where we were turning in for the night on November 11, when we were suddenly given orders to march forthwith to Ypres. I was advance-guard to the Regiment, and was told to meet a Staff-officer of the Cavalry Division just outside the town of Ypres. It rained most of the night and was bitterly cold, and the march took us along roads that were absolutely congested with refugees, French troops, etc., all going in the opposite direction. At about four o'clock on the morning of November 12, I came upon the Staff-officer in question (Howard of the 16th Lancers), and we moved straight on through Ypres to the Château of Hooge on the Menin Road. This was our first introduction to the Ypres salient. Such infantry as we saw appeared to be absolutely "done," and what with the bad weather and everything it was a most depressing place. The Château itself was practically untouched as yet, although it was soon to be in ruins, and for the next three years one of the hottest spots in the whole of the line. I remember that one of the machine-gun limbers was filled with drink from the cellars of Hooge, and that Bogey[1] drank the last glass of Hooge brandy during the battle of the Somme.'

To this Major Hall adds: 'When we arrived at Hooge the last of the available infantry reserves had gone in, including the cooks and batmen, and I was told that General Haig had declared that in the event of another attack he himself and his Staff would go into the line, as there was no further way left in which he could influence the situation!'

It was from the Château of Hooge (a typical, modern red-brick château, approached by an avenue from the road),

[1]Captain and Q.M.R. H. Boag.

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that Sir J. French and Sir D. Haig had witnessed, between 2 and 3 p.m. on October 31, the rally of the 1st Division and the re-capture of Gheluvelt by the Worcesters. That, perhaps, was the most fateful moment in the whole of the battle. Brigadier-General Charles Fitzclarence, V.C., commanding the 1st Brigade, achieved prominence in this engagement by assembling all the cooks, orderlies and transport men he could muster, and incorporating them in the ranks.

From November 12 until the 17th the Bays remained in the vicinity of Hooge, constantly relieving the infantry in various places on the line. They were almost continually under shell-fire and the weather was very cold. The whole district was a sea of mud.

A feature of this period of the war was the fact that the enemy apparently used fixed rifle batteries during the night, or fired single shots from machine-guns, these being laid on tracks and cross-roads which he thought we used. All night long in this sector a continual desultory fire of rifles went on. It was most noticeable, although we did not suffer many casualties from it.

On the 18th the Regiment returned to its billets at St. Jans Cappel. Here it remained until the 21st, when it had to set out to march on foot for the trenches in front of Kemmel, a distance of about 14 miles – rather an undertaking in their cavalry-soldier's kit, as it was freezing hard and the roads were slippery.

In the Kemmel trenches, which they took over from the Greys that evening at about ten o'clock, it was terribly cold, and they had no hot food; but the men behaved wonderfully. At 8 p.m. on the 23rd they were relieved by the Welch Regiment, and after marching some 2 miles to a farmhouse they were all given a hot drink of tea and rum, and then, to their great delight, found a motor-bus convoy waiting to take them back to billets. These buses had not very long

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been brought out. They were originally London omnibuses, and on many of them still were the signs and advertisements so familiar to Londoners. The men took great delight in ringing the bell and shouting out the usual London bus-conductor's remarks. The Regiment's horses had been moved farther back, and now, after a longish drive, they were found in farms just north of Meteren. On the following day, November 24, the first leave-party went to England. It was probably the first time in any war that leave was granted as a matter of routine.

'We remained in this particular farm – or, rather two farms – until Christmas.' Captain Kingstone writes: 'All the horses of the squadron were put in a field close to the farm, and the men slept in the farm-buildings and also in the buildings on the smaller farm some two or three hundred yards away. The officers of A Squadron at that time were Pinching, Single, Thompson, Barnard and myself. Barnard and I lived in the little farm, but the remainder in the big one. They were typical Flemish farms, of the smaller kind, probably about 200 acres each. The farmhouses, like most of their type, consisted each of one general living-room which acted as kitchen, dining-room, etc., for the farmer, his family and his workmen; and two or three bedrooms, quite airtight, and a kind of parlour which they scarcely ever used. The cooking used to be done in one of those long stoves which stick out into the room, and around it in the evening the farmer and his family and his workmen would collect, and spend the greater part of the time smoking very strong-smelling tobacco and spitting all over the floor. As many of us had to sleep on that particular floor, our relationship became rather strained when we made forcible attempts to prevent them from their indulging themselves! On the whole they were very kind people, and to have 6 officers, over 100 men and their horses billeted on you, must have

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been very trying for them. I went to see these people several times during the war, but eventually, after the German attack of April 1918, these two particular farms became the front line. However, they were not much damaged, and in 1925 the old farmer was back again, carrying on in exactly the same way, and probably spitting to his heart's content.

'As far as our men were concerned, it must have been a very trying time for them. They had nothing to do in the way of amusement, practically no lights of any kind and extremely indifferent quarters to live in. A large proportion of the men at this time were reservists of a fair age, many of them married and living in normal times in a certain amount of comfort. The horses came off worst of all. Luckily they were not clipped, but this added to the difficulty we had in keeping them fit and exercising them. We eventually, before Christmas, contrived to cut down a large number of hop poles, which in that part of the world are about the size of telegraph poles, and built one large stable, which we hoped we should be able to roof with straw and stuff. After a fortnight's work, this rather peculiar erection was completed, and then the farmer arrived with an enormous bill for his straw and hop poles. This was duly paid by the authorities. As probably every squadron in the cavalry then in France had done something somewhat similar, the expenses concerned must have been enormous. However, all was for the best. The farmers came off well out of it, because, although they complained, they got paid for every hop pole, we got our stables, and the Germans found not much there when they arrived three and a half years afterwards. There was a lot of discussion at the time as to whether it is better to clip horses under these conditions or not, and whether, if you can provide wind-proof shelter all round, a horse can be kept properly fit without

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C. Squadron Stables. Thienshoek, 1915
Showing straw windscreens

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head cover. As far as I remember, this was the system adopted by Harman with C Squadron at "Dunghill Top."

'We spent our first war Christmas in this place, and I think managed to be quite happy. People in England sent out all kinds of clothing, etc., including some very nice things from the Queen and Princess Mary.'

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CHAPTER XVIII

Trench Warfare

What 'Trench Warfare' really meant can be expounded only by one who experienced it for himself. An officer of the Regiment, Major H. W. Hall, M.C., describes it thus:

With the entry of the Regiment into the now famous Ypres salient, our introduction to trench warfare took place: that static struggle, which, except for short spasmodic intervals, continued up to the fracture of the German line on August 8, 1918.

All branches of the Service had to adapt themselves to this new form of battle, where yards took the place of miles, and where the skyline was the parapet of the enemy's trench – perhaps a hundred yards away, if one was lucky.

The cavalry of all the arms had the hardest work to adapt themselves to this constricted method of fighting. All the training, both of officers and men, taught one to look away into the distances, to think over the hill and to use the mobility that our association with the horse gave us.

Now this was all changed: one pored over maps not of miles to an inch, but of inches to a mile, whereon wriggly lines, carefully plotted, gave us the position of every dug-out, trench-mortar, trench junction, etc.

The loss of a trench, an advance or retirement of a hundred yards of filthy mud, was chronicled in our own and the enemy's *communiqués* as a feat of arms; and the grenade of past history looked as if it would supersede the rifle.

The cavalry are to be congratulated, perhaps, that they never did quite imbibe all the principles that trench warfare implies, but were able, when the occasion required, to lift

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their eyes to the horizon and to think again at 15 miles an hour.

Time and again, on taking over sections of the line from the infantry, the question 'What is that place over there?' was met by the reply that they did not know, but that 'that communication trench down there is Curly Alley,' etc. This, one admits, was more common in the latter stages of the war.

The above remarks may seem derogatory to the skill, endurance and bravery needed to wage trench warfare successfully, but this is by no means the writer's feeling on the subject, as he well knows all the very high soldierly qualities required.

There is no doubt that prolonged periods in the line have very marked psychological effects on the troops engaged, effects markedly different from those of open warfare.

The first is the feeling of nakedness they experience when out in the open, coupled with the desire to get under cover at once and the reluctance to advance when under fire. The second is the lack of confidence in the rifle, and the feeling that fire will be useless at quite moderate ranges.

The effect of the shortening of the horizon has already been touched upon. In addition, all suffer more or less from severe fits of depression. No doubt that lack of exercise in generally cold and damp surroundings contributes largely to all this.

To sum up, trench warfare turns the 'Advance! Get on!' of all soldiers' training into 'Stand fast! Stick it out!'

During the long periods of permanent lines of battle which characterised the Great War, set battles were staged at intervals by one side or the other. Then the cavalry

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moved up, preparatory to advancing to the gap that the infantry were to punch for them.

Then they had to operate over a terrain seamed with trenches and shell-holes and laced with belts of wire.

Later operations generally ended in their going into the line on their feet, to give rest to the sorely tried and weary infantry.

The process of getting into the line during periods of close-contact fighting is not as easy as it sounds. Having received from those in authority over us the section of the line that we are to occupy, the first thing to be done is to reconnoitre it.

This was usually done by two or three of the more senior officers. Generally this can be carried out in the daylight, as it is not worth while for the enemy's artillery to turn on to such small parties, and certainly the unfortunates already holding the line do not want it signalled that a relief is taking place.

These guides, having got a good idea of the lay of the land into their heads, met their squadrons, or companies as we were usually organised into, after dark, some distance behind the actual trenches.

They then endeavoured to lead their respective commandoes into that part of the line which they were to take over.

The squadron, strung out into single file, burdened with all the impedimenta necessary for a tour in the trenches, struggles along in rear of its guide. It is pitch dark and is probably raining.

No one except the guide has seen the country in daylight. Surrounded by a solid barrage of *sotto voce* curses, the long snake of men moves slowly forward. Frequent halts take place, for the rear to close up, or to take cover from a sudden hate by the enemy's artillery.

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Warnings of obstacles are passed down the line. 'Mind that hole, sergeant!' 'Mind that hole!' 'Mind that blanky hole!' 'Mind that blinky blank hole!' 'Mind that —— hole!' gradually fading away into the distance until an ear-splitting crash, followed by much blasphemy, announces that the rear file carrying the dixies has fallen into it!

Verey lights soar up in long arcs, lighting up the country with their weird greenish glare.

Arrived at the commencement of the communication trench – if the guide hasn't lost his way! – we file down into it, and struggle down its long winding length, grievously encumbered by our various gear.

Slipping off the duckboards, if we are lucky enough to find any, or wading through anything up to a foot or so of mud if we are not, we arrive at the front line.

Squadron and troop officers take over from their opposite numbers, and are shown the beauties of the landscape as far as can be seen, and where Fritz the sniper is most dangerous, and the various articles of trench stores such as braziers, ammunition bombs, etc., are taken over.

Then the relief files out and we have to settle in, tell off the men to their various posts, such as snipers, sentries, bombers, etc., and perform all the multifarious duties that this intensified form of warfare has rendered necessary.

Then, except for the sentries, the men can stand down from the parapet and get what rest they can in 'baby elephants,'[1] dug-outs, etc.

This is the normal procedure in a quiet part of the line that is well organised.

How much more often does it happen that there are no communication trenches, and the front line must be

[1] 'Baby elephant,' a sheet of corrugated iron rolled into a half-circle ∩. This was covered in earth, and gave a little shelter from the weather and shrapnel.

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entered as stealthily as possible, over a ground devoid of cover, except shell-holes full of water, and swept by bursts of machine-gun fire, after having traversed some miles of roads and tracks, all of which are carefully swept by the enemy's harassing fire!

Getting into the line can be more of an adventure than holding it.

When in the line it is one's bounden duty, according to the Heads, to annoy and irritate the enemy. Thus we come to the subject of Raids.

These may be of many and diverse kinds, ranging from a small one, employing from twenty to fifty raiders, to a show where a whole brigade may take part, and which may develop into a minor operation, where the gains may be permanently held.

Raids are generally caused by the following: the desire of Intelligence for identifications; the wish to obtain moral superiority over the enemy and to cause him loss; or some specific purpose, such as the destruction of some particularly dangerous sniper's post or obnoxious trench-mortar, etc.

In all cases the general procedure is the same. The objectives having been carefully selected, and the raiders having undergone a strenuous training behind the line, a devastating barrage of trench-mortars is put down on the enemy's front-line trench, backed up by a box barrage of howitzers and field-guns, which isolates the doomed portion from outside help.

After a few minutes of this, the trench-mortars lift and the raiders, armed with bombs, trench-sticks and bayonets, rush the opposing trench, kill the inhabitants, keeping a few for '*I*' (*i.e.* "Intelligence") as specimens, while parties block and hold the communication trenches.

As much damage is done to dug-outs, machine-guns, etc.,

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as is possible in the time. Then the recall signal goes up – usually a rocket from our lines – the guns again increase in intensity, and the raiding party, loaded with souvenirs and their own wounded, return whence they came.

Then starts the real fun. The raiders themselves are relieved, and, covered with glory and mud, return to the back area, to buck about how many Bosches they killed, while the unfortunates holding the line have to endure the concentrated 'strafe' that, as sure as Fate, will be meted out to the vicinity whence the trouble started.

To the raidee the business is even more unpleasant.

It is reported that on a certain portion of front a few stray trench-mortar bombs have been falling, which have not been noticed before.

Otherwise all is quiet and our patrols report no German activity.

Suddenly from the Bosche line a series of muffled reports, and up in the skies a number of little sparkling serpents come wriggling towards our lines.

Almost simultaneously the whole place is crushed by an absolute roar of stunning explosions, while overhead rush whiz-bangs, to burst behind, mixed up with the thumping crash of the five-point-nines.

Clouds of mud, smoke and dust are lit up by the red glare of the trench-mortar bombs.

The order is given to fire the S.O.S. The men have manned the parapet without waiting for orders and are firing rapidly into the dark.

Within a few seconds of the red stars of the S.O.S. rocket being seen comes the swish of our field-gun shrapnel, so close over our heads that it makes us duck, to burst on the S.O.S. lines just in front of the wire, giving us heart to pour more cupro[1] nickel into the wire, where in the light

[1]Small-arm bullets.

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of a Verey flare we can see a few grey figures staggering off into the darkness.

That is what it is like if all goes well.

Otherwise, perhaps the S.O.S. is not fired. A rush of grey figures of the *Sturmtruppen* over the wire, the crash of exploding stick-bombs, a short stutter of a machine-gun and a few scattered rifle-shots, then quiet except for the roar of the barrage beyond.

Later, when the counter-attack takes place, it is a case of smoking dug-outs and smashed Vickers guns, together with a few huddled khaki lumps in the bottom of the trench, with their discs, badges and paybooks gone!

During the first battle of Ypres the Regiment went into the front line at the Herenthage Château, on the Ypres-Menin Road, about a mile east of Hooge. They relieved there some infantry of the 1st Corps who, for the last ten days, had withstood all the enemy's savage attempts to batter a way through to the Channel ports.

The Regiment had had only one day's rest since coming out of the line near Messines, but they had not endured the strain of constantly having to resist in one spot, without hope of relief and with no change from the constant shelling.

When the Bays took over this portion of the line, the infantry they relieved were suffering severely from close-range rifle-fire from German snipers, who had established complete superiority.

Our line ran through the stables of the Château, which enabled us to pick such positions that an accurate fire could actually be brought to bear on certain portions of the enemy's trench.

In the short space of a few hours the tables were entirely turned, fifteen of the enemy had been definitely killed, and

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not a shot was fired from their line and no movement could be observed.

On the other hand, the Bays could move about with impunity, and it was possible to walk up to the front line across the open, where shortly before to poke one's head over the parapet was asking for sudden and rather messy death.

This in the space of a short November morning!

The trenches had their share of amusing incidents, as witness a certain Squadron Leader, having gone round his sector, laid him down for a few hours' sleep in a small hole in the ground near the head of Gordon Alley in the Hohenzollern Redoubt, some time in 1916.

He was awakened shortly afterwards by one of his sergeants, who informed him that the enemy were evidently making an attack on Sap No. 6. The noise of quite a considerable battle, with the shouts of the contenders and the crash of exploding bombs, was certainly being wafted on the night air.

A counter bombing attack was immediately organised, and the outfit, headed by the Squadron Leader, nervously handling a Colt ·45, proceeded down the trench in the direction of the din.

The front line here was very lightly held, mostly by means of saps pushed out ahead of the front line and garrisoned by three or four bombers, rifle-men and machine-gun.

The enemy apparently had not gained a footing in the main trench and the inhabitants of the sap were making a gallant fight of it.

Arriving at the sap and cautiously peering round the corner, backed up by all the might of the British Army that it had been possible to enlist at the moment, what a sight met our gallant officer's eyes!

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A rum jar nearly empty, and his doughty bombers sitting on the parapet daring the Bosch to come and fight them! – their exhortations being punctuated by throwing Mills bombs in the general direction of the enemy's trench line!

The necessary steps to deal with the situation having been taken, quiet reigned again over that portion of the line, until either the enemy blew a mine or one of our infernal trench-mortars fired and provoked wholesale retaliation from the enemy and heartfelt curses from our long-suffering holders of the line.

The mud and cold of Zillebeke Wood in 1915, the Hohenzollern Redoubt at Vermelles in 1916, Hargicourt and the line facing the Nord Canal south of Cambrai in 1917, were the sections the Regiment did its work in as infantry. Those were all organised trench parties – to help the infantry and to keep us from forgetting what a shell sounded like when we were in the back areas!

Elsewhere in this book is set down what happened in each place. In none of them did the Regiment fail to do what it set out to do, and in none of them did the enemy gain any advantage.

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CHAPTER XIX

The First Winter and the Second Battle of Ypres

In the last weeks of 1914 and for the first six weeks of the New Year the Regiment was out of the line and in billets at the French border village of Flêtre (between Bailleul and Hazebrouck) and in the neighbouring farms. It was mostly a comparatively quiet time on the Flanders front. Since the first great German onset against Ypres had died down in November, there was for weeks little more than the minor worrying of trench warfare.

There were two good reasons for the comparative inactivity of the enemy on the Western Front. The Germans were occupied with their operations in Poland and Galicia, where hard, fine weather made action on a large scale possible. In Flanders it was easy to realise why the armies of earlier wars had the accepted tradition of 'going into winter quarters' from November to March. There was broken weather, with many wet days, that varied from a dull mist and drizzle to steady rain, or a storm of wind with driving sleet and a scatter of snowflakes.

There was no hard, steady frost. There were some very cold nights, with a thaw as soon as day came, and there were some bright days that gave delusive hopes of fine weather. By Christmas-time the roads were all reduced to a wretched condition, the fields were sodden, and all over the Flanders flats the country had become for a while impracticable for any movement on a large scale. In the trenches of the opposing fronts both sides were having a trying time. It was a difficult task to keep parapets, revetments and traverses in condition. Movement along the communication trenches

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meant wading through slush and water. In the front trenches men stood more than ankle-deep in cold fluid mud, that was soon disabling numbers each night with the new malady of 'trench feet.' It was luck for the Regiment to be out of the line for so long.

There was welcome leave to England for many of all ranks. Of those who had left Aldershot in August there remained, towards the end of 1914 (according to an enumeration made on December 20), 6 officers and 299 of other ranks. Besides carrying on the ordinary daily routine, a certain amount of training was arranged, with special attention to musketry and training for dismounted action. Christmas brought a few days of fine weather, and with the help of abundant supplies and presents from home, including the gifts of the King and Queen and of Princess Mary, the day was kept under pleasant conditions.

On Christmas Eve there had been the sound of heavy gun-fire from Ypres. Close by Flêtre, within easy riding and even walking distance, rose the Mont des Cats, a hill only a little over 400 feet in height, but giving a wide view over the Flanders plain. During the stay at Flêtre it had many visitors, if the weather was at all favourable. Those who went there on Christmas Eve to see what was happening away to the northward found the view blotted out, with mist on all the low ground. Rumours that the enemy meant to spoil the Christmas celebrations by a new onset on Ypres were negatived by complete quiet next day.

In clear weather the view from the hill extended not only to Ypres but to Dixmude. There was one day in January with such clearness after rain that, with field-glass or telescope, the view extended to the sandhills that fringe the North Sea coast of Belgium. That day Ypres seemed to be only some 3 miles away. There were few days without a reminder of its nearness by the sound of gun-fire, and when

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A. Squadron in Front Line
Sanctuary Wood, 1915

C. Squadron Stables. Winter, 1915
Mont des Cats in background

A. Squadron in Trenches
Sanctuary Wood, 1915

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this increased it always gave a suggestion of a possible emergency-call back to the old fighting front.

On February 8, King Albert paid a visit to the Cavalry Division. The Bays paraded in marching order, and formed in line along the Flêtre-Meteren road. The King, with Generals Allenby, De Lisle and Briggs, passed along the line, stopping here and there to exchange a few words in French or English with officers and men. All were impressed with his soldierly bearing, but he seemed worn and tired.

At last, without any warning, there came on Monday, February 22, a call for the 1st Cavalry Brigade to move up at once to the front. Colonel Wilberforce notes that he was counting on having a quiet day when he got the order at 11.30 a.m. He went on in advance with the Brigadier to Ypres. The Regiment paraded – dismounted – at 2 p.m., embarked on a long convoy of London motor-buses, and rattled over the cobble-stones of the French and Belgian roads for 20 miles, round by Steenvoorde and Poperinghe, to Ypres, where they arrived after dark about 7.30 p.m. It had taken many hours to cover the 20 miles, and for the drivers it had been a very trying journey. The road-surface was everywhere in bad condition, and in many places seriously damaged. It was very slippery, and for mile after mile it was full of French and British transport and miscellaneous traffic.

On the western margin of the town, by the railway station, the Regiment 'debussed' and formed up to march through Ypres. The rest of the Brigade was to be billeted in the town. The Bays were to spend the night on the other side of it in the buildings of what had been a large Reformatory School, about a thousand yards beyond the Menin Gate.

The general destruction of Ypres was yet to come, but

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the place had already suffered considerable damage. Nevertheless, numbers of its people were still clinging to their old homes, regardless of intermittent shell-fire and the warning spectacle of the ruin already wrought at the Cloth Hall and elsewhere.

French as well as British troops were in billets in the town, for our Allies were holding more than half the front of the salient. After the terrible British losses in the first battle of Ypres, the French had for a while taken over nearly all the salient (a fact that press censorship had carefully concealed from the public at home). In this latter part of February 1915, French troops still held a long line on the north and east fronts of the salient, from Steenstraate on the canal north of Ypres, eastward by Langemarck, and then curving round in front of Zonnebeke and Polygon Wood to the Menin Road about a mile and a half east of Hooge – a front that secured possession of the high ground.

The left of the British line, where it joined up with the French right, was held by the 2nd Cavalry Division in trenches in the woods beyond Zillebeke. On the day before the 1st Cavalry Division had been called up to Ypres – Sunday, February 21 – there had been sharp fighting here. The enemy exploded a mine close in to the line held by the 16th Lancers, attacked vigorously and captured about 60 yards of an advanced trench. There was an unsuccessful counter-attack, and the fighting cost the Lancers 10 officers, and about 50 per cent. of the other ranks engaged, killed and wounded.

The Bays spent the morning after their arrival at the school, and in the evening relieved the 16th Lancers in the Zillebeke trenches. The relief was completed by 10.30 p.m. In places the enemy front was only 15 yards away, and while the relief was in progress the Germans indulged in desultory shelling with trench-mortars and minnewerfers.

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Major Ing was slightly wounded, and 9 of the men were hit more or less seriously.

The Bays were in the trenches until February 28, when the 1st Cavalry Brigade was relieved by the 2nd, and the Regiment went back to its former billets at the Reformatory School. During the days and nights in the trenches there had been cold, broken weather, with a snowstorm on the 25th. There were a few casualties from bombs and snipers. Of the latter, some were firing from well-protected points close by, in the crater of the exploded mine. It was reported that the enemy was at work pushing forward another mine gallery, and on the 24th steps were taken to deal with this menace.

A party of Royal Engineer miners, under an expert lieutenant, was brought up, and worked vigorously and rapidly on a counter-mine, 'digging like badgers.' On the afternoon of the 26th the mine was charged, and in the dusk, about 7 p.m., it was fired. 'Impossible to say with what success, except that we saw some planks go up, which makes one think we must have been in the right place,' is the impression recorded by a diarist. Steps were then taken to push out a mine under the old crater and the lost trench. While the experts in mining were thus busy, the Bays did a good deal of work in improving the trenches and their communications.

On March 1, leaving only B Squadron and its machine-guns in the trenches, the Regiment was back at the school. Next day and on the 4th the enemy's artillery was very active, and many shells fell near the billets, but there were no casualties.

On that day orders were received for the 1st Cavalry Division to return to its rest-billets. The 2nd Brigade, now in the trenches beyond Zillebeke, was to be relieved by the French that evening, but before withdrawing they were

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to co-operate in a minor combined operation with the French on their immediate left. It was for this that B Squadron of the Bays (Captain Sloane), had remained in the trenches. They had prepared for this raid, and were obviously better able to carry it out than a newly arrived unit who did not know local conditions. The rest of the Regiment paraded at 6.30 p.m. and marched back through the town to 'embus' on its west side at 8.30. After a slow journey over the same bad roads by which they had come, they reached Flêtre at 12.45 a.m. on the 5th.

The 'combined operation' had some remarkable incidents. Its object was the capture of the crater in front of the line and the advanced trench which had been rushed by the Germans on February 21, when their mine was exploded and the crater came into existence.

At a later stage in the war, minor trench operations like this were planned in elaborate detail that left nothing to chance; there were rehearsals behind the line; a programme and time-table set forth the work of all ranks engaged; and the attack was covered by a tremendous artillery and machine-gun barrage. The orders were longer than those for a pitched battle of earlier wars. The methods of trench warfare were still in the period of crude developments in the spring of 1915, and on this occasion the plan was complicated by two different armies, English and French, detailing troops for it with very defective combination. Two mine galleries had been pushed out from the line, one by the British, the other by the French on their left. They were to be simultaneously exploded. The British mine was to wreck the defences of the enemy in the crater; the French mine was apparently intended to blow a breach in the enemy trench beyond it. A British storming-party was to dash into the wrecked crater and push on to the German trench, while at the same time the French would make a

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THE LEFT-HAND MAN OF THE BRITISH ARMY. JUNCTION WITH THE FRENCH SANCTUARY WOOD, 1915

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drive against it on the left, joining hands with our men in the captured trench.

It was a dark night, with a steady downfall of rain. There was some anxiety as to whether, in the confusion of this attack in rain and darkness, French and English would recognise each other at once, as they joined up. So ten French infantry men were sent into the British trenches to accompany the advance of our men. They came wearing their heavy great-coats and apparently carrying all their kit – hardly the best outfit for a scramble through the crater and over the barrier beyond it. The Bays were to form the vanguard of the attack. A party of bombers was to lead the way, with the ten Frenchmen close behind them. One of the French interpreters attached to the Regiment gallantly volunteered to accompany the advanced party.

Everything was ready in the British trenches, when the French sent word that the attack must be delayed. Their mine was not ready. But it would be charged and fired by 10.30 p.m. There was a dreary wait until this zero hour arrived, then the Sappers successfully exploded our mine, which had been loaded with a heavy charge of blasting powder.

Through the smoke and falling debris the stormers dashed out into the wrecked crater. There was no resistance, and they pushed on till they came to a steep bank 8 feet high, topped with a breastwork of sandbags. Not a shot or a bomb came from it, and beyond it men were heard talking together. The impression was that these must be our Allies, and that the flank attack from the left had got in as easily as the stormers of the crater. It was suggested that some of the French party attached to the Bays should get over the barrier and verify this conjecture, but encumbered as they were they failed to climb the slippery rain-sodden bank, and sat down in the crater, awaiting further

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developments. The plucky interpreter asked for a leg-up, promising to go in and 'clear up the situation.' A couple of the Bays gave him such a vigorous hoist that he shot over the top of the sandbags and disappeared. A moment after he scrambled back and dropped into the crater. He had had a wonderful escape from being killed or made prisoner, for as he was shot over the parapet he had dropped on his feet in the midst of a lot of Germans, apparently half dazed by the mine explosion, for before they recognised him he was able to get back to comparative safety among his friends.

The French had not attacked. Their mine was still unready. There had, it is said, been a big flash and a dull report away to the left as our mine went off, but this was only the explosion of a heavy minnewerfer bomb pitched into the French line at haphazard, just as the Sappers fired the British mine.

Captain Kingstone, who was in charge of the machine-gun section of the Bays, had meanwhile been directed to run his guns forward into the crater, to assist in the expected push into the German trenches. Halted in the midst of the wreckage, he saw close to him a hand projecting from the mass of debris. He caught hold of it, and with the help of one of his men, pulled out a German soldier. He was little the worse for having been blown up and buried, and was suffering only from shock and bruises.[1]

[1]Mr. Coleman, the American motorist, who did such good service attached to the Staff of the 1st Cavalry Division in the first year of the war, tells us that: 'The prisoner was a funny little fellow – a stocky Wurtemburger in green corduroys and a knitted helmet. When rescued, he lapsed into unconsciousness for an hour. He had been through the first battle of Ypres, he said later, in which he was the only one of his regiment to escape death or a wound. Blown high in the air – very, very high, it seemed to him – he felt a great mass of debris fall upon him. He told us, in a spirit of resignation to his fate, that to have lived through the October and November fighting on the Menin Road, and be thrown skyward by a mine, then buried, and still live, entitled him, he thought, to spend the rest of the war, without disgrace, in an enemy prison' (*With Cavalry in 1915*, p. 100).

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MACHINE-GUN IN FRONT LINE. SANCTUARY WOOD, 1915

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The Bays now tried a bombing attack on the parapet. It was kept up for more than an hour, but gave no result. This was largely because the bombs supplied were very unsatisfactory weapons.[1] Numbers missed fire. Some could only be induced to flare up by lighting them with matches. While this ineffective attack was in progress the Engineers constructed a sap head running out into the crater, to secure it against reoccupation by the enemy. The attack was then abandoned, and the men withdrawn into our trenches. The detachment of Bays marched back to Ypres, and through the city to 'embus' for Flêtre, which they reached as dawn was coming, after a dreary journey through the rain. Some hours after their departure from the front, the French fired off their long-delayed mine.

In the middle of March for a few days there were hopes that the Regiment would have a chance of seeing real cavalry service in 'open warfare.' There was to be a serious attempt to break the enemy line. The attack was to be launched against Neuve Chapelle on the 10th, after an intensified artillery preparation, and covered by a barrage from our batteries. If all went well, the British advance would surge forward over the Aubers ridge and menace the enemy's hold on Lille. When the line was broken, the cavalry would come pouring through the promised 'gap' in the barrier.

So on the evening of March 9 orders came for the Bays and the rest of the Cavalry Division to 'stand to,' ready to move off at one hour's notice from 6 a.m. next morning. Heavy gun-fire was heard all that day, and rumours came

[1]Bombs were made of jam tins, with a short length of time-fuse which had to be lighted with a match or a short piece of smouldering wick. When the mine went off, the concussion of the explosion set off a whole tray of our bombs that were being held in readiness for the attack, blowing the unfortunate bomber into pieces, and hurting several others standing by.

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of a great success, but no orders to move. Until the 17th the 'stand-to' order was renewed each day, the notice gradually dropping to three and three-quarter hours. Then the order lapsed. Neuve Chapelle had begun with a limited gain of ground, and then all-forward movement came to an end. It was the first of several similar disappointments.

The Regiment remained about Fletre till March 26, when the Headquarters were moved to Thieushoek and the squadrons to new billets in the farms in that direction, but not far from their recent quarters. The period of 'rest and training' lasted until April 23 – the training being in preparation for further trench warfare.

Early on Friday, April 23, there came a sudden summons to the front, with bad news as its reason: 'The Germans had broken the French line between Langemarck and Bixschoote.' The 1st Cavalry Division was at once to move up to Poperinghe. At 7 a.m. the orders were issued for the 1st Cavalry Brigade to be ready to move off at once, and the Bays made hurried preparations for a start.

The news sent with the emergency orders told only part of what had happened. The whole position of the salient was in deadly peril, in face of a new and strangely demoralising form of attack upon its northern front. The attack had begun early in the evening before, and when the message was sent much ground had been won by the enemy. The second battle of Ypres had begun, and it had begun with the menace of disaster.

Before following the fortunes of the Regiment in this long fight for Ypres, we must briefly outline the events of the days that preceded it. In the middle of April, most of the Ypres front was fairly quiet, with nothing more than the usual desultory worrying of trench warfare. But south of the place there was close and continuous fighting for some days for possession of Hill 60, a mere hillock formed as a

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spoil-heap from a cutting on the neighbouring railway, and important only because the ground near it was such a dead flat that it became a useful observation point, commanding a wide view. But on April 20 the enemy began a heavy bombardment of Ypres, which went on day and night. It caused widespread destruction in the city, and much loss of life, and it was difficult to keep the main thoroughfares of the place cleared of the debris of falling buildings.

All the lines of supply for the north and east fronts of the salient from the Yser Canal to the Menin Road passed through the place, and it was conjectured that the object of this bombardment was to block the way for supplies and reinforcements along these lines, as a prelude to an attack on some parts of these fronts. But though we had good information as to the enemy's movements, there was no indication of troops being massed anywhere for such an attack. It came in an unexpected form on the evening of the 22nd.

It had been a fine spring day, with a slight wind blowing steadily from the north-east. After sunset, when the dusk was deepening into night, and the usual convoys of supplies were beginning to move out along the roads radiating from the city, the men taking them out on the north side began to feel a strange acrid scent in the air. It set them coughing and hurt their eyes. Then, through the gathering dusk, along the roads and over the open ground, they met thousands of our Allies hurrying back towards Ypres in what looked like panic. Linesmen and Colonials, Zouaves and Turcos, formed a confused crowd, with here and there artillery teams galloping back without their guns. Men staggered and dropped, and lay gasping on the ground. It was like an impossible nightmare.

This mass of fugitives was trying to escape from the clouds of chlorine gas with which the enemy had deluged

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4 miles of front from the canal eastwards. It was a new devilry, that was at first denounced as unworthy of civilised soldiers, but was soon to be recognised as a legitimate development of civilised warfare.

Behind the gas-cloud the enemy's infantry was advancing, and his field artillery were shelling the fugitives. The French were hustled across the canal on their left, and two of its crossings were seized by the Germans. On the right the gas-cloud spread into the Canadian positions, and their left brigade was flung back to form some kind of a defensive flank, where the enemy were pouring through the 4-mile breach in the front. From the south side, now held by the British, a few battalions of Regulars and Territorials were hurried up to form a scratch force barring the northern approach to Ypres. Reserves were called up during the night, and further ground was lost as the Canadians, outflanked by the enemy, fell back fighting to new positions. As day dawned, the general situation was decidedly an anxious one.

The French were making a good fight to check the further progress of the Germans, who had got across the canal north of Ypres and held the village of Lizerne. This was a danger-point, for a successful enemy push on this side would soon cut the Poperinghe-Ypres road and isolate the city and the salient.

The emergency orders sent by General Headquarters to General Allenby's Cavalry Corps early on the 23rd were that he was to hurry up his three divisions to support the French on this side.

Soon after midday the whole of the 1st Cavalry Division was concentrated just south of Poperinghe, the Bays and the 1st Brigade having marched 9 or 10 miles from their rest billets. Here there was a halt for a while. Heavy firing north of Ypres and in the direction of the canal told of

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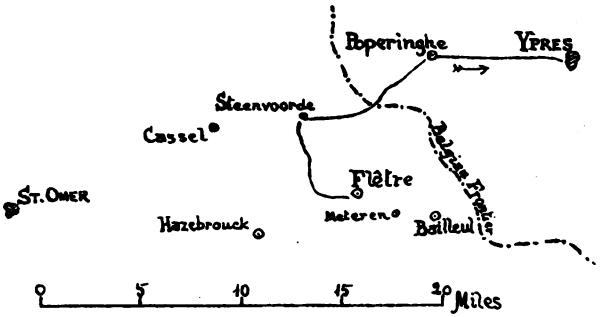

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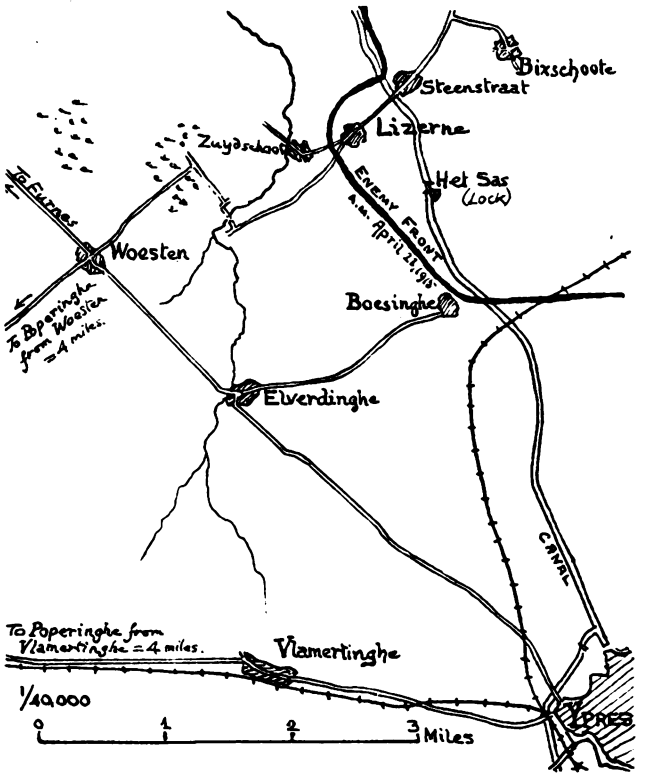
17 — Rest billets, beginning of 1915, and move to Ypres.



— Situation west of the Canal. —

— April 23, 1915 —

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hard fighting in progress; but there were comforting rumours that the German advance was being held, and the British line reorganised. At 2.30 p.m. the 1st Brigade was ordered to move north-west towards the large village of Woesten. It halted about a mile and a half from the place, and Colonel Wilberforce was directed to take the Bays on to the village as a dismounted force, and to organise its defence. He rode on in advance to reconnoitre, and found the French had already put the village in a state of defence, and there was a line of shallow trenches round it held by two battalions of their Territorials.

About 2 miles away to the eastward was the new German front, occupied the night before when the enemy got across the canal by the gates and foot bridge of the lock at Het Sas, and in greater force, by the road bridge at Steenstraat. Here they had pushed on and seized the village of Lizerne. The French were opposing their further progress on a line running from Boesinghe to Zuydschoote. A reserve position was being prepared along the line of the Ypres-Furnes road, and Woesten, on a low swell of the ground falling towards the brook east of it, was to be its strong point.

The Colonel put B Squadron and the machine-guns of the Bays into the trench line, between the two French battalions, and placed C Squadron in close support of the battalion on the right. A Squadron was billeted in the village. So far as our men were concerned, it was a quiet day. But towards evening there was heavy firing away towards Lizerne. A French Zouave regiment was making a counter-attack which ended in failure.

During the night continual artillery and rifle-fire on both sides of the canal made sleep difficult. On the 24th there was no change in the situation. French reinforcements came marching up from the stations where they had

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detrained during the night, and went on to join the fighting line. In the morning there were infantry from Arras and Rheims, and in the afternoon a very useful-looking regiment of Basques from the Pyrenean border. In the forenoon some shells burst in Woesten village, and a Frenchman was killed. A Squadron relieved B. In front, firing went on all day, and the French made a big counter-attack towards evening. The report went round that Lizerne had been retaken and the enemy driven across the canal. It proved to be baseless. The Germans were holding their own. The satisfactory point was that they were gaining no new ground.

Sunday, the 25th, was a fine warm day. Fighting continued along the French front, but still without any appreciable gain anywhere. More French reinforcements arrived and many batteries of the 75's. East of Woesten and away towards Elverdinghe the country was (to quote a contemporary note) 'getting stiff with the rows of long quick-firers.' It was not easy ground for artillery observation. The view everywhere was limited to the front, for the flat country was dotted with trees and clumps of wood. A Squadron and the machine-guns were withdrawn from the trenches and rejoined the Regiment in Woesten.

Next day (Monday, 26th) the French, now heavily reinforced and backed by the batteries they had got into line, felt strong enough for a determined large-scale counter-attack in order to retake Lizerne and drive the enemy across the canal. The early hours of the day were misty, but before noon all was clear and the weather was bright with the sunshine of a warm, early summer day. The attack was to be made at 2.30 p.m. Two Royal Horse Artillery batteries of our cavalry division were posted just east of Woesten to assist in the preparatory bombardment, shelling Lizerne at a range of 3000 yards. The 1st Cavalry Brigade was

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moved out about a mile to the north-east, to act as a reserve in support of the French left. The Bays were here posted on the margin of a stretch of woodland. Close by was the extreme right of a Belgian force which was supporting their line along the canal north of Steenstraat. For the first time in the war the Bays here found themselves in contact with the Belgian army.

There was heavy fighting till after dark, the French attacking through and on both sides of Zuydschoote, against the enemy salient at Lizerne. On the other side of the canal the British were making a counter-attack north of Ypres. Little was to be seen from the Regiment's position in the woods, but towards evening reports came through that Lizerne had been cleared of the enemy and the Germans were being driven across the canal. Next morning more detailed news was available, and it seemed that the first reports had been over-optimistic. The attack had been a success, but the enemy held a narrow strip of ground along the west side of the canal, with a bridge-head covering the Steenstraat crossing, and it was said they were still in some houses at the east end of Lizerne.

The Regiment spent the night in the woods, and remained there all next day, while fighting continued along the canal and aircraft and artillery were busy. After another night in the woods, the Bays received orders at 9 a.m. on Wednesday, 28th, that the 1st Cavalry Division was to be withdrawn that day to rest billets, the French no longer needing their help.

While at Woesten, Colonel Wilberforce had been informed that he was transferred to Staff duty as Assistant-Quartermaster-General of the district command at Étaples. He now handed over the temporary command of the Regiment to Major Ing, after having served with it for just over twenty-nine years.

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The Bays had gone back to Woesten in the forenoon, mounted there and marched back in bright warm weather to Poperinghe, where there was a rest until 7 p.m. The town showed marks of a long-range bombardment it had suffered with 24 c.m. shells during the operations against Lizerne, some of the houses being completely wrecked. It was an attempt of the Germans to interrupt the flow of reinforcements through the place.[1]

In the evening the Regiment marched some 6 miles westward, and went into billets near Houtkerque, a village just inside the French frontier. On May 1, Lieut.-Colonel A. Lawson, Royal Scots Greys, arrived and took over the command of the Regiment.

Next day there was a march of 6 miles westward to billets at the village of Wormhoudt, and on the 3rd (apparently as the result of some change of plans) a march of about 15 miles south-eastward to the Regiment's former billets at Thieushouk. Here there was a rest during the 4th and 5th.

Meanwhile there had been continuous fighting north of Ypres. The French succeeded in winning the east bank of the canal on the extreme left, but on the right the sagging northern front of the salient had produced a dangerously narrow point, jutting out about Grafenstafel, and it was reluctantly decided that the line must be shortened. This was effected during the night of May 3, without any

[1]This bombardment had caused a semi-panic in Poperinghe, as rumours ran that the heavy shells came from guns west of the canal. Long afterwards it was discovered that they were fired from a giant long-range gun some 7 or 8 miles north-east of Ypres in the southern portion of the Forest of Houlthoust. The gun was a 24-c.m. naval gun, firing a special light shell, with a false nose to help the stream-lining of the shell. This gun a few days later fired into Foch's Headquarters at Cassel, but did no damage. A few of its shells fell near B Squadron horse lines, and as there was an aeroplane observing the effect, the horses were moved into lines parallel with and close to the hedges. Of course the fire was not directed at us, but at the town of Cassel.

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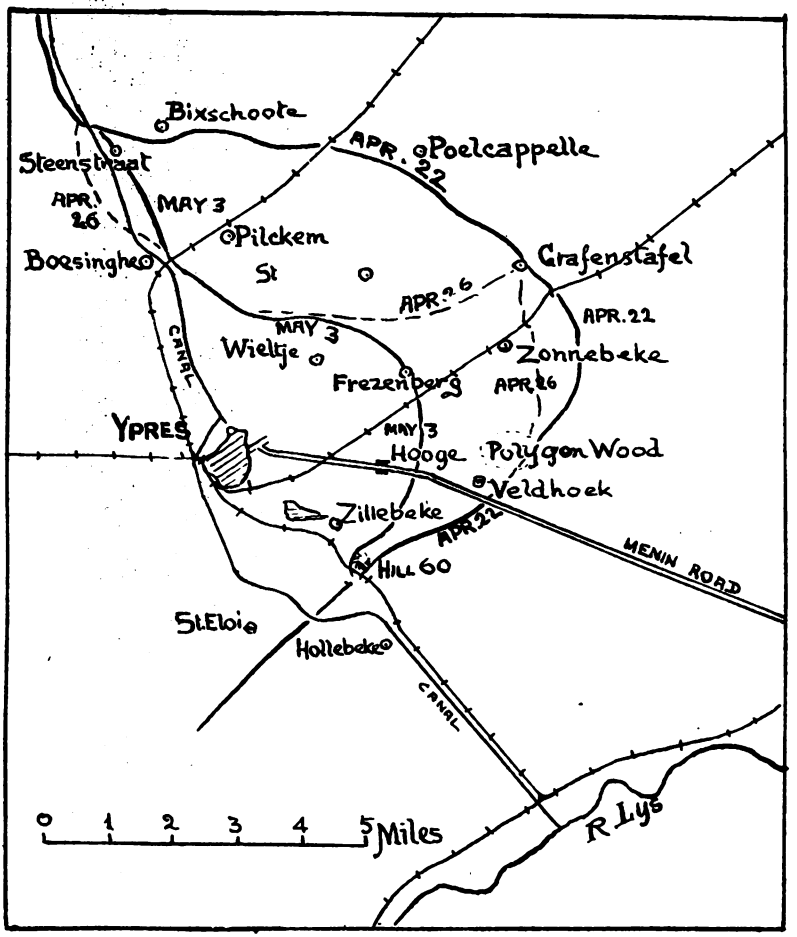

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Sketch showing the Allied Front before the gas attack of April 22; the front on April 26; & the shortened line taken up in the night of May 3, 1915.

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interference by the enemy, who did not discover the retirement till daylight next day, and bombarded the empty trenches before dawn.

The new line ran from the railway crossing on the canal north of Ypres to the low swell of ground known as the Frezenberg Ridge, and then southward along the high ground about Hooge.

There was a lull in the fighting for a couple of days while the enemy were making the necessary reorganisation of their line. There was little more than some artillery firing along the front. But on the 5th the Germans became suddenly active on the south-west of the salient, and by a gas attack captured Hill 60 – the spoil-heap near a cutting on the Ypres-Comines railway, which had been the scene of hard fighting early in April.

This might be the prelude to a serious enemy attack on that side, and a minor result of the incident was that, on May 6, the Bays were ordered to send up a strong working-party to Vlamertinghe, to help in strengthening the defences on the railway south-west of Ypres. They marched up to near Vlamertinghe in the afternoon – 260 strong – and, leaving their horses, sent working-parties at dusk to a point on the railway where a new trench line was being dug on both sides of it. Here they worked till after midnight, then returned to their horses and marched back to billets, which were reached about 5 a.m. Next day they marched off again at 4.30 p.m., and had another long spell of work to complete the new trenches, returning to Thieushouck at 4.30 a.m. on May 8. This was a well-earned day of rest.

But all that day there came from the north-east of the salient the sound of heavy firing. The Germans, after having readjusted their front, had begun a serious attack on the Frezenberg Ridge, now held by our 28th Infantry

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Division. During that day and the next, our front here was gradually forced back. The Ridge was lost, and a new line was taken up, running across the Ypres-Zonnebeke road a little to the west of the hamlet of Verlorenhoek. Our men had made a splendid fight, and their losses were very heavy.

At 3 a.m. on May 9, emergency orders came for the 1st Cavalry Brigade to concentrate at Godwaersvelde, on the Hazebrouck-Poperinghe road, about 6 miles south-west of the latter place. The Bays turned out at once, and marched at 4.15 a.m. From the rendezvous at Godwaersvelde the Brigade marched up to near Vlamertinghe, and halted about 8.30 a.m. in a field south of the town. Here it remained till late in the afternoon. It was a fine day, but with a chilly wind. The sound of heavy firing came all day long from the north-east beyond Ypres. At last orders came to leave the horses picketed in the field, and move up dismounted to a château about half-way between Vlamertinghe and Ypres. Here the Bays arrived at 7 p.m., and spent the night in billets and bivouacs in the buildings and grounds. (One of the officers of the Brigade had an unpleasant experience in the dusk. Taking a walk on the lawn, he found himself suddenly immersed in cold water densely covered with duck-weed – the moat of the château, which in the bad light he had taken for a well-mown grass margin.)

Next day was spent at the château awaiting further orders. These came at 7 p.m., and directed that the 1st Cavalry Brigade was to relieve the 2nd in the reserve trenches of the north-east front, south of Potijze.

Marching after dark round the north of Ypres, the Regiment crossed the canal by a pontoon bridge. It was a dark night, and beyond the canal the way was by lanes and cross-roads, in which the guide presently lost his way.

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Luckily, some of the officers of the Bays had gone up during the afternoon to have a look at the position held by the 2nd Brigade, and on the way back one of them – Captain Hall – had taken a compass-bearing on Potijze, and was now able to give the general direction. The enemy's gunners were busy, and some shells came near our line of march, luckily without doing any damage. Ypres was being steadily bombarded, and many fires were blazing in the half-ruined city. The Brigade transport had been sent forward through its streets and found it a difficult time, as the way was strewn with recently fallen debris. Outside the Menin Gate the shells were coming in quick succession.

After a toilsome march, the Bays relieved the 9th Lancers on the left of the 2nd Cavalry Brigade in the reserve trenches. The 11th Hussars came in on our right. On our left was a Territorial battalion, the 8th Middlesex.

May 11 was a warm, sunny day. During the forenoon things were fairly quiet. About 1 p.m. there was a brief outburst of shell-fire. An infantry battalion came marching along in the open in rear of the trench line; this at once attracted the enemy's attention, and for some twenty minutes there was a sharp bombardment, mostly of small high-explosive shells that came whizzing over the heads of the Bays and did them no harm, but inflicted several casualties on the infantry column.

After dark, at 8.30 p.m., the Regiment moved forward and took over trenches immediately to the north of the Ypres-Zonnebeke road, about three-quarters of a mile east of Potijze Château, and west of the ruined hamlet of Verlorenhoek. The 5th Dragoon Guards were on their right and the 11th Hussars were in reserve at Potijze Château.

The 28th Division had been withdrawn from the front, after exceptionally heavy losses in the fighting of the

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preceding days,[1] and the cavalry was now holding this sector of the front. The trenches were in bad condition and on unfavourable ground. They really were part of an incomplete trench system, that, as a result of the German gains of ground, had become the front line. The original front line, that had been stabilised after the first battle of Ypres, and had been developed into a strongly entrenched line during the winter, had been lost, and was here 3 miles away to the eastward. The recent withdrawal from the Frezenberg Ridge had given the enemy a position that overlooked the new improvised front, and was the crest of a gentle swell of ground that gave them an admirable field of fire.

The trenches were shallow, mostly a single line, neither wide nor deep enough to provide satisfactory cover; and though it was now to rank as the front line, there was no wire whatever before it. Finally there were practically no traverses.

As it was pitch dark when the Bays took over the line, it was by no means easy to realise what the position was. But work was at once started to improve the trench line. Digging proved difficult and unpleasant work, for on this low ground the water-level was only a little more than a foot below the original bottom of the trenches, and in several places the workers found decaying corpses buried.

Two squadrons, A and B, were in the front line, while C Squadron was placed in reserve, and had to set to work digging a trench for themselves. The enemy were not far out in front, and during the night indulged in a good deal of sniping, or rather haphazard rifle-shooting. There were

[1]The Division had been in the front line since the fighting began on April 22. Only one of its Lieutenant-Colonels was left, and most of its battalions were commanded by captains. One of them (the 7th Suffolks), had been actually wiped out, only seven survivors remaining. The 2nd Cheshires had only one officer left.

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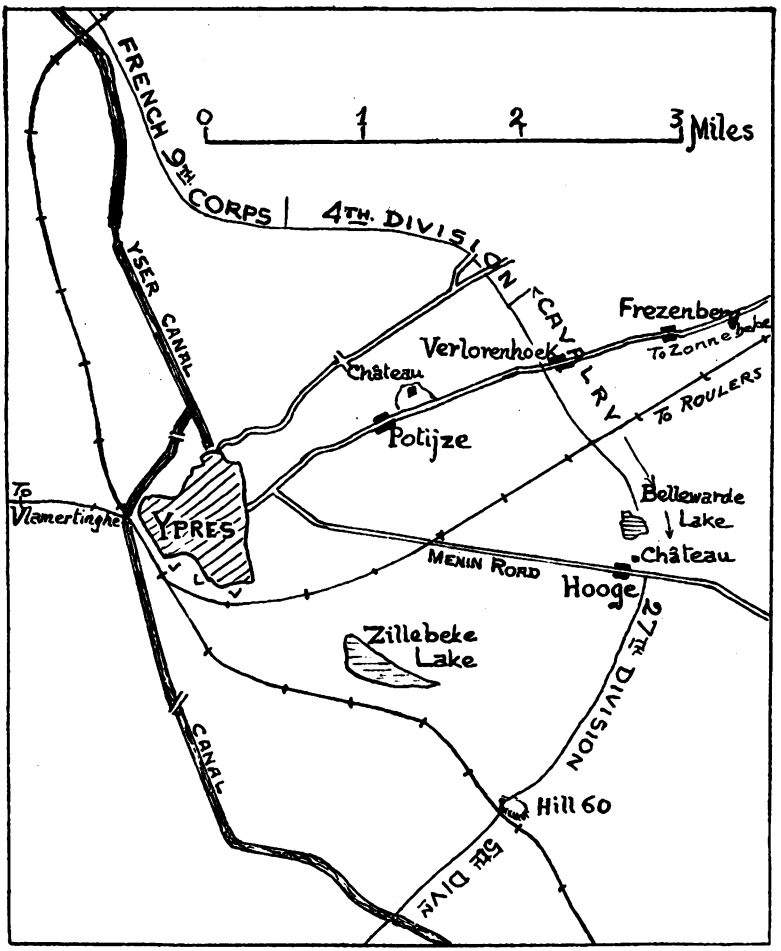

— Ypres – Allied Front, evening of May 12, 1915. —

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few hits, but among them was Turner, the Regimental-Sergeant-Major, killed with a bullet through the neck by the snipers.

There were no dug-outs, but some cover for Regimental Headquarters was provided by finding and enlarging a hole, and fixing up for head cover a big door from a ruined farm. Into this hole went the Colonel and the Second-in Command, Major Ing, the doctor and a couple of sergeants. Here they found restricted room for work and protection that was anything but reliable.

Shortly after midnight there arrived a small reinforcement of R.A.M.C., the 19th London Sanitary Section (Territorials), an officer and 12 other ranks, detailed for special and almost experimental service. They were attached to the Regiment for 'anti-gas measures.' The men were chemists in civil life, and though each carried an old pattern Lee Enfield and some cartridges, their special equipment was for each a cylinder and spraying apparatus intended to neutralise a gas discharge. It was not easy to decide how they were to be utilised, but after consultation between the Adjutant of the Bays and the section commander, they were posted at intervals along the trench line. There was no opportunity for testing their special equipment, but to their credit, be it said here, that in next day's battle, their first experience of fighting, every one of them stood to his post, and all were killed in the trench.

As the dawn came on the 13th, the enemy began a heavy bombardment of our front. They made some very accurate shooting. Captain Hall had, before the light came, posted two of the best marksmen of B Squadron in the roof of a ruined farmhouse, just behind the left of his trench. They were to try and deal with the German snipers, who had been worrying the Bays during the night. As the enemy opened fire, two big shells crashed into the ruined house, throwing

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up huge clouds of red dust. Four more immediately followed, all making direct hits, and the house collapsed. But out of the clouds of dust and flying debris the two marksmen came running, half smothered but unhurt. They sprinted across the open, amid yells of applause from the squadron, and dropped into the trench, where every one at once wanted them to say how many Germans they had killed.

The first shots had been fired in the twilight just after 3 a.m. The enemy bombardment soon developed into something like a barrage on the front trenches, but shells were also bursting behind the line, well back towards Potijze Château, and all telephone wires were soon cut and communication of any kind with Headquarters ceased for hours. The bombardment rose to a fierce intensity against the trenches immediately north and south of the Zonnebeke road. An experienced observer at the Château tells how this line of trenches, during the forenoon 'was covered continuously with a heavy pall of smoke, as if a well-fed conflagration was raging beneath. The flashes of bursting shells in that smoke-cloud were so numerous that no human eye could follow or count them, even in a most restricted field of vision.'[1]

The bombardment included a large proportion of heavy howitzer shells – 'coal-boxes' and 'Jack Johnsons.' By 7 p.m. a good half of the trench held by Captain Hall's squadron (B) on the left of the Regiment had been blown to pieces. Of No. 1 troop on its extreme flank here only Sergeant Isles and a trooper survived. The troop commander, Second Lieutenant Heron, was killed. Of his men, all except these two were killed or wounded, and several were buried in the wreckage of their trench. Number 4 troop also suffered heavily. This was the most exposed part of

[1]Frederic Coleman, *With the Cavalry in 1915*, p. 223. Mr. Coleman had an exceptional experience of bombardments.

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the line held by the Regiment, the trench running through an open meadow. But all along the line there were losses. The hole occupied by the Headquarters near the new support trench held by C Squadron was blown in, but happily none of its occupants were injured.

It was a trying experience for all ranks. Hour after hour they crouched in their shallow trenches, under a pelting storm of exploding shells and in a cloud of dust and smoke, without even the excitement of firing, for the enemy's infantry was still lying low, waiting for the collapse of the defence before they attacked. But the men stood the trial doggedly and even cheerily. More than once some lively spirits in B Squadron improvised a mouth-organ concert in the midst of the din.

Towards 10 a.m. the bombardment began to slacken, and the Germans were seen advancing in our front. The Bays opened fire with machine-guns and rifles. The difficulty of keeping up a steady fire was increased by the fact that the rifles were covered with mud and dirt thrown up by the bursting shells, and in many places the men were working in couples, one firing while his comrade cleaned and loaded another rifle for him. In the Bays' front the enemy was held. His advance seemed half-hearted, but on our right the troops holding the line withdrew rapidly from their damaged trenches, leaving a wide gap south of the Zonnebeke road.

Major Ing dashed out of the trench, and standing up by the road under a heavy fire succeeded in rallying some of them, and shepherded them back to the Bays' trenches, where they were sent to reinforce B Squadron on the left. For this fine action Major Ing received the D.S.O.[1]

[1]The official record of the award runs thus: 'Major George Harold Absell Ing, 2nd Dragoon Guards (Queen's Bays). At Ypres on May 13, 1915, when the line was broken beyond the right flank of his regiment, he came out of his trench

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Some small parties of the enemy came on and got into the abandoned trenches on the right of the Bays, and a flank was thrown back on this side to hold them. But they crouched in shell-holes and made no attempt to come on. Others of the enemy got into some ruined houses about 300 yards to our front. The attack then died down, but the bombardment continued intermittently.

The Colonel now sent back the Adjutant, Captain Kingstone, to Potijze Château, to report to Brigade Headquarters. He arrived there safely, and found General Mullens and his Staff very anxious about the situation. During the long hours since the telephone wires were cut, they had had no news from the front, and did not know precisely what the position was. The General was very pleased to hear that the line still held, though obviously it was in serious danger. He decided to send up the 10th Hussars from the 3rd Cavalry Division to make a counter-attack, and recover the lost trenches on our right. Kingstone was directed to accompany them and show them the way up.

The Hussars no sooner issued from the park of Potijze Château than they came under heavy shell-fire, and this continued all the way up. They suffered serious losses and their Colonel was killed. As they drew near the front line, the Bays greeted them with loud cheers, and the Hussars, instead of pushing straight on, were attracted towards our trenches, changed direction and came crowding into the Bays' line. Meanwhile the troops on our left had retired from the position, and both flanks were exposed. If the enemy had now made a really serious and determined advance, the result would have been very serious.

But the Germans, after the failure of their first advance,

in the front line, stood on the road in the open under heavy shell-fire, stopped the retirement of forty men of another unit, and turned them into his section of the defence. The good results of his gallant action were far-reaching.'

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were strangely unenterprising, and for the rest of the day there was only a desultory bombardment and occasional rifle-fire. The weather had broken early in the day, and rain was falling steadily, to add to the general discomfort in the battered and crowded trenches. The Hussars were able to work their way to the right and re-establish the line on that side, the few Germans who had got into the abandoned trench having slipped back to the ruins of Verlorenhoek.

Our men had little to eat all day, and it was only towards midnight that a new supply of rations was brought up. After dark, the reserve, A Squadron, relieved the remnant of B Squadron, and the Field Squadron, Royal Engineers, came up, and during the night repaired the trenches and put in some traverses. The wounded were sent back and the dead removed.

The losses of the Regiment had been serious. With only about 175 of all ranks in the line, 2 officers and 28 other ranks had been killed, and an officer and 32 other ranks wounded. This made a total loss of 63, besides that of the officer and 12 other ranks of the Sanitary Section attached to the Regiment.

The casualties among the officers of the Bays were Second Lieutenant C. B. Heron[1] and Lieutenant G. M. Chapman, R.A.M.C., killed, and Lieutenant H. V. Misa, wounded.

It had been a fine day's work for the Regiment. Of the three units in the front of the sector, the Bays only had held on – this, too, in a position that for hours seemed tactically hopeless. General Mullens sent up his congratulations, adding that he would have to ask the Bays to hang on a bit more, but that he knew the line would be safe in their hands.

During the night of May 13–14, the 19th Hussars came

[1]Second Lieutenant Heron was only nineteen years of age. He was the son of an officer of the Bays who was killed while serving with the Regiment in the South African War.

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up on our right, and were posted in support 250 yards behind the front, and the 11th Hussars took over the evacuated trenches on our left. The 14th was a fairly quiet day. There was occasional shell-fire and some of the usual sniping. At 8.30 p.m. the Regiment was relieved by the Oxfordshire Yeomanry (2nd Cavalry Division). The Bays rendezvoused at Potijze Château, where there was a long delay, followed by a march back through Ypres to Vlamertinghe, where they arrived at 2.30 a.m. on the 15th, and were billeted in huts to the south-west of the town.

May 13 had been one of the critical days of the second battle of Ypres. It was one of the days on which our opponents showed an unwonted lack of energy, and lost an obvious opportunity. The line east of Potijze Château was decidedly near breaking-point about 10 a.m. that morning, and the Bays may claim that it was their dogged hold on to their shell-shattered trenches that saved it, and possibly bluffed the enemy into the idea that there was a dangerous strength behind it. Probably the fact that since the 9th the British had been pressing their line farther south helped to divert some of the attention of the enemy's supreme command from the Ypres front.

After this the battle died down. It is open to military historians to fix for themselves the date when it ended. It is usually chronicled as having begun on the evening of April 22, and ended three weeks later, on May 14. Accepting these days we may say that the Bays took the leading part in the last round of the long fight.

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CHAPTER XX

Waiting for a 'Gap,' May 1915–January 1917

The Bays had a couple of days' rest at the Vlamertinghe Hut Camp, and received a draft of much needed reinforcements from the base, including six young officers.

By official reckoning it was later settled that by this time the second battle of Ypres was over. It was decided that it had ended on Thursday, May 13 – three weeks after the first gas attack. But before going back to rest-billets the cavalry were still to be used for some time to come in the defence of the Ypres salient, and that was in all the long line the place where for years the routine of trench warfare was liable any day to be varied by an outburst of hard fighting, not infrequently on a scale that in our little wars of earlier years would have been counted sufficient for it to rank as a battle. The Bays were kept in, or close up to the salient till the last days of May, and were destined during this time to have one more experience of a German attack in force.

On May 16, General de Lisle, commanding the 1st Cavalry Division, inspected the Regiment and congratulated all ranks on their conduct in the recent fighting. Next day orders came for the Bays to move up that evening into the line near Hooge.

Since the last German attack, on May 13, the salient had been comparatively quiet. But day and night there was intermittent shelling, now here, now there, along the front, with not a few big howitzer shells bursting in the town itself. In these latter days of May, its destruction was making rapid progress. The way from the Grand Place to the Menin Gate was now, for much of the distance, a

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narrow lane, kept clear by piling up the debris of fallen buildings to right and left.

The Bays marched from Vlamertinghe early in the evening of the 17th, passing through Ypres after dark. They took over a support position just below the embankment of Bellewaarde Lake, which was honeycombed with dug-outs, to an extent that suggested doubts of its stability. The ground below it was sodden with a day of rain and swampy with leakage from the lake.

Next evening the Regiment took over the trenches to the left of Hooge Château. It had only lately been a fine type of a great Flemish country-house, with a stately range of buildings. Now nothing remained of it above ground but low scraps of wall, stiffened here and there with sandbags. The cellars were used as dug-outs. Regimental Headquarters were in one of these, at the east end of the ruin. It was not a pleasant place, for its doorway opened in direct view of the nearest enemy trench, and was incompletely masked with sacking. Here the German trenches were close by, across a narrow No-man's-land, and the whole of this Hooge position, traversed by the Menin road, with right and left the ruins of the little village and stretches of shell-torn woods, was the extreme point of the salient, and an object of keen desire for the enemy. It was on the inner margin of the heights east of Ypres, and its possession would give an uninterrupted view over the flat ground as far as the Menin Gate.

The Bays held the line here till the 21st and had a fairly quiet time, probably because the Germans in their immediate front were already occupied with their elaborate preparations for the gas attack that was soon to follow. On the evening of the 21st, the 2nd Cavalry Brigade took over the sector, and the Regiment went back to the hut camp at Vlamertinghe.

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HOOGE CHATEAU

From Front Line, May 1915

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But on the evening of Whitsunday, May 23, the Bays, with the rest of the 1st Cavalry Brigade, again moved up by Ypres and the Menin road to the point of the salient. North of Hooge the 28th Infantry Division was holding the front trenches from the Zonnebeke road to Bellewaarde Lake, and the 18th Hussars prolonged the line from the Lake to the Menin road. South of this the line was continued through Sanctuary Wood by the 9th Lancers, the 11th Hussars, the Queen's Bays and the 5th Dragoon Guards.

On the Sunday, till late in the afternoon, there had been a steady westerly breeze. In the evening it worked round to the east, and there was a warning that this would be favourable to the enemy gas attack. And the attack came at dawn on the Monday.

The gas cloud came rolling in, mingling with the morning mist, just after 3 a.m., and then the enemy's gunners opened fire. The cloud poured thickly over the line on a front of about 2½ miles from the Menin road to some distance north of the Zonnebeke road. Eddies of the wind carried some of it across the Menin road into the 1st Cavalry Brigade position in Sanctuary Wood. Later it drifted in patches across the flat ground towards Ypres, and the German artillery began throwing gas shells along the Menin road and over and into the town.

The 28th Division and the 18th Hussars were badly caught by the gas and suffered heavy casualties. Mere handfuls of men were holding the line when, after sunrise, the Germans launched their first infantry attack. Most of the 28th Division were driven back. On its right the enemy advanced on both sides of the Bellewaarde Lake. The 18th Hussars, now reduced to a remnant of officers and men, were forced back beyond the ruins of the Château, but clung doggedly to the wrecked houses of Hooge village, assisted by a working party of northern Territorials which

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had come up during the night, and by a squadron of the 9th Lancers.

For the 1st Cavalry Brigade, though there was no serious attack south of the road, the situation soon became an anxious one. As to what was happening close at hand on the other side of the road there were no reports, but it was evident that things were not going well. There was hard fighting near at hand about Hooge, where it was obvious that the line south of Bellewaarde Lake had been driven in, but farther to the left the sound of battle came from the ground well behind the line, along the Roulers railway.

An officer's patrol, sent out by the Queen's Bays to 'clear up the situation,' brought back the report that the Germans had gained a considerable amount of ground north of the road. Nearer at hand, through the 18th Hussars being gassed and hustled out of their trench line, the fighting had extended south of the road. The 9th Lancers had been caught in the gas and had lost one of their trenches, and the left of the 11th Hussars was involved in the fighting. The ruins of Hooge were still held, but with difficulty, and might be lost at any moment, but reinforcements were coming up from the Cavalry Reserve and a Territorial Division.

The farthest point gained by the enemy attack that morning was about a thousand yards behind the original front line of the 28th Division. There was serious danger of the line south of the road being taken in flank and rear if the German advance swung round against the woods south of Hooge. Steps were therefore taken to form a defensive flank along the margin of Zouave Wood, facing north towards the Menin road. To the force collected for this purpose the Bays contributed Major's Hall's squadron, which had three men killed by shell-fire while moving up to its position in Zouave Wood. But no serious attack was

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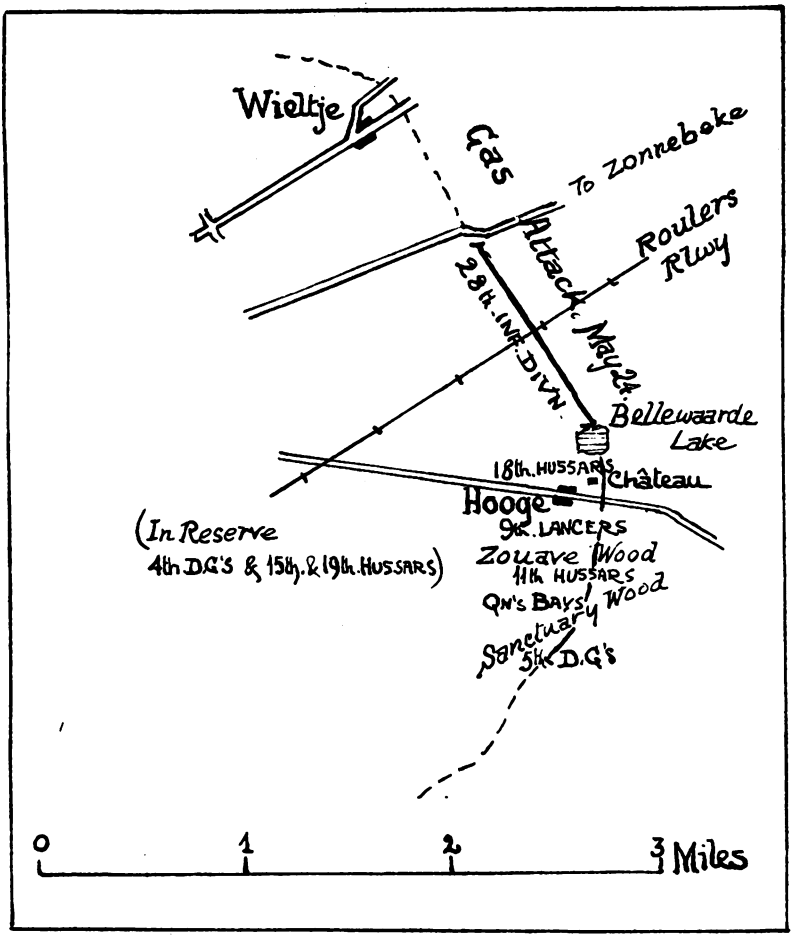

— Distribution of Troops right & left of Hooge, —

Ch. XIX. (21) — May 23 & 24. 1915. —

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made on this defensive flank. Once only during the afternoon the enemy tried to bomb up a line of trench on the section held by the Bays, but they were promptly beaten off, and did not try again.

During the afternoon some of the ground lost north of the road was regained, but a good deal of it remained in the enemy's hands. The fighting died down and the enemy's artillery-fire became slacker as darkness came on. It had been a trying day, but orders received early in the evening brought the welcome news that the 1st Cavalry Brigade would be relieved during the night.

It was after midnight when the Bays began to move out of the trenches and the position in Zouave Wood. Every one was dead tired, and the march back under shell-fire and mostly across country till close into Ypres, was a slow and weary one. Passing through the town, Vlamertinghe was reached about 4 a.m. on the 25th, in the light of the coming dawn. Numbers of the men were so utterly exhausted that they at once threw themselves down on the ground to snatch some sleep in the open.

It was for the Regiment the last experience of defence-work in the front lines of the Ypres salient. There was a much-needed rest on the 25th, but on the two following days A and C Squadrons supplied digging-parties for a new reserve line that was being constructed near the camp. On the 27th the Regiment was taken out of the line, and moved back to Hardifort, near Cassel, for a period of 'rest and training'—the rest being varied for detachments of the Bays by their supplying working-parties for the new line near Vlamertinghe.

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This move out of the salient at the end of May 1915 was for the Regiment the beginning of a prolonged period of comparative inaction. It was a disappointing time, all

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This move out of the salient at the end of May 1915 was for the Regiment the beginning of a prolonged period of comparative inaction. It was a disappointing time, all

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the more because there were, again and again, hopes that the opportunity would soon be given for taking a prominent share in operations in which the mounted arm would play its proper part and contribute largely to securing decisive results. It was no consolation that all the cavalry units in France shared the same disappointing experiences.

During this first year of the war, a situation new to European warfare had developed. In September 1914, the allied victory of the Marne had been at first taken to be the opening event of a great drive that would clear the invaders out of France and Belgium. Up to the second day of the battle of the Aisne the orders from the General Headquarters of the British Expeditionary Force were for the pursuit of a beaten enemy.

But a new phase of the war began when the Germans made their stand on the Aisne heights, and then from that stronghold the opposing trench systems grew up that soon extended along the immense front from the Swiss frontier to the North Sea. On the allied side in the British Expeditionary Force there was not for months a sufficient infantry force available to man the fixed front thus established, and every cavalry unit was called upon to do infantry work in the trenches. Officers and men adapted themselves with marvellous resourcefulness to the new conditions. But it was not their proper work. It was wasteful employment in a task for which most of their special training was no preparation.

From the outset their leaders were given to understand that this was only a temporary expedient, and they were promised that, as soon as possible, they should resume their special duties as a mounted force – this, too, in a way that would give them the prospect of playing an all-important part in the hoped-for transition from the stabilised warfare of the trenches to the open warfare of movement.

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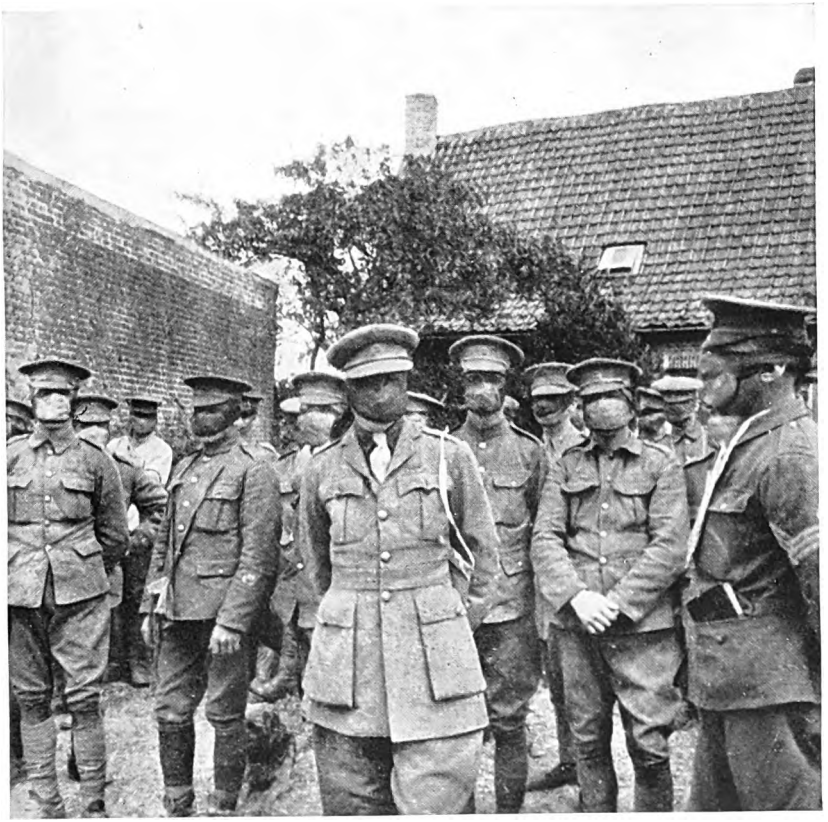

B. Squadron in the first Gas Masks, 1915

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In the first weeks of 1915 there had been confident predictions that, as soon as the weather permitted operations on a large scale, and sufficient heavy guns and shells could accumulate for an intense artillery preparation, there would be an end of the deadlock, and the German front would be broken by a massed attack under a tremendous artillery barrage. A breach would be made in the enemy's defences, and through this 'gap' the cavalry would be pushed forward as the spear-head of a decisive attack.

In March, at Neuve Chapelle, the first attempt was made to realise this plan. Numbers of our cavalry units were warned to be ready to complete the expected success. But the call for action never came to them. Only a small dent was made in the enemy's line, and it held good. The battle was a disappointing affair, though it was described in the official *communiqués* and in the Press as a notable victory.

When the failure was reluctantly and tardily acknowledged, it was explained that Neuve Chapelle was nevertheless a useful experience, indicating the way to, and giving promise of, better results before long. It had revealed defective Staff work, but that could be remedied. It had shown that in face of an attack on a limited front it was not difficult for the enemy to hurry up reinforcements to bar the nascent 'gap.' The next operation would, therefore, be planned on a much larger scale, with more ample artillery preparation and support, and on a front from which it would be possible to blast no narrow defile, but a huge yawning breach, in the hostile barrier. So once more there were hopes for a way being made to open warfare and brilliant feats for the mounted arm.

Months and years were, however, to go by before these hopes were realised. There were to be several repetitions of Neuve Chapelle on a larger and larger scale, beginning with the same tidings of victory, but ending with the

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realisation that the results obtained had fallen far short of expectation. Meanwhile the cavalry were hoping and preparing for the promised 'gap,' and when the promise failed of accomplishment, they settled down to prepare and hope for better fortune next time – always confident that, however long these might be deferred, welcome opportunity and decisive victory would come at last.

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The stay of the Regiment at Hardifort and other billets near Cassel, which lasted from the end of May to the third week of September 1915, was the first episode in this long period of 'waiting for the gap.'

Hardifort is a village 18 miles west of Ypres and about the same distance south of Dunkirk. It is on the main road from that port to Cassel, the quaint little town that looks out from its hill-top over these low-lying coast lands like a watch-tower. Hardifort is on the lower slope where, like a glacis to the tower, the hillside sinks into the level lower lands.

There are well-tilled farm lands for about half-way to the sea. Then comes a belt of ground won from the marshes of the coast region – a dead flat country, cut up by a network of canals and wide or narrow lines of open drainage – stretching to the fringe of sandhills, 'the dunes,' amidst which is the town of Dunkirk, once a famous fortress over which France and England engaged in fierce quarrels. It had now risen to temporary importance as a torpedo-boat and aircraft station, that played a gallant part in the defence of the Narrow Seas against the German raiders, and was in consequence a frequent target for enemy air bombardments.

The district between Cassel and Dunkirk lies just inside the French frontier, but it is largely still a Flemish land. It was the old fame and importance of Dunkirk that kept

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it territorially for France, not Belgium. A large number of Belgian troops were now training in the coast tract. Nearer Cassel were the billets and camps of the British cavalry, now concentrated to train for their proper work. The 1st Cavalry Brigade was in the farms and villages near Cassel, its railhead for supplies being at Arneke, a village and station on the branch line from Hazebrouck junction to Dunkirk.

The month of June was fine and warm, with the summer heat tempered by breezes from the sea. The men had good billets in farms and outbuildings, but in the hot weather numbers of them improvised sleeping quarters in the open, sacks and waterproof sheets stretched across a ridge-pole making comfortable sleeping quarters even on a showery night. There was not much running water in the district, so the horses were generally watered by filling canvas troughs by means of bucket gangs from selected ponds.

Refitting, absorbing drafts from home, and some steady training prepared for a series of inspections, all of which went off satisfactorily. On June 3, General Makins, now commanding the 1st Cavalry Brigade, inspected the Regiment. On the 14th there was another parade for a visit by General Mullens, who at the end of May had taken over the command of the 1st Cavalry Division from General de Lisle. The latter started for Gallipoli to command the 29th Infantry Division. Next day there was an inspection by the Commander-in-Chief, Sir John French.

In this early summer of 1915, so far as operations on a large scale were concerned, there was a lull on the Western Front, but great events were in progress elsewhere. The struggle in the Gallipoli Peninsula was developing into an enterprise that drew large British forces eastward. The enemy had begun his successful drive against the Russian armies in Galicia, and Italy had come into the war. It would

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not be possible to organise the projected allied attack in France on a grand scale until the late summer or the early autumn. Meanwhile trench warfare continued along the opposed fronts in France, developing now and then into more serious local conflicts. There was fighting in the Vosges and the Argonne. In Artois, Foch was making limited progress, winning here a bit of trench, there a ruined village, in slow and costly local operations. The Belgian front along the Yser was never more than relatively quiet, and the Ypres salient was always more or less lively. It was the nearest part of the front to Hardifort, and day and night the guns could be heard, the cannonade rising at times to a volume of sound that suggested something very serious was happening. In the middle of June there was hard fighting about Hooge, and some of the ground lost in the gas attack of May 24 was recovered. There was a morning when it seemed as if 'rest and training' would be interrupted by a recall to the salient. Orders came for the Bays to be ready to move at two and a half hours' notice, and there was a 'stand by,' but nothing came of it.

The 'rest' for the Regiment was anything but complete. Successive detachments of officers and men were sent off in turn to spend a few days and nights at a 'digging camp' near Vlamertinghe. The work in progress did not entail visits to the salient, for the new line was being constructed well in rear of it, and some 3 miles west of Ypres. In the two great battles of Ypres the line had held, but ground had been lost and the salient dangerously narrowed. Nothing is certain in war, so provision was being made for unpleasant possibilities, and a new reserve line entrenched well to the rear.

It went along the gently rising ground west of the Groote Kemmel Beke (Great Kemmel Brook), a stream that runs down from the Kemmel hills to join the Yser some miles

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THE FRONT LINE. HOOGE CHATEAU, 1915

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below Ypres, the general course of the brook and the new line being south to north. It was to be a double line of front and support trenches, with redoubts at intervals. Much of the work had to be done in stretches and clumps of wood, which, while they afforded cover from view, entailed hard labour at digging in a soil that was a tangle of roots. The chief spell of work was from twilight till after midnight. The officers, besides directing the work, took a full share in it, handling pick and spade with their men, and helping to fill and carry up sandbags.

The latter hours of the night were supposed to be a time of rest, but newcomers found sleep difficult, for here and there along the position, and often close to the diggers' camp, there were a number of heavy guns. They were mostly silent in the daytime, and kept carefully hidden in bowers of green branches, to prevent the enemy's airmen from spotting them. But at night they were often in action, and they became very active in the grey of the early morning when tired diggers were settling down into a really sound sleep. The enemy often replied with big shells from long-range guns. So far as the working camp was concerned, these usually only meant additional noise, but occasionally there was a disastrous shell-burst, with resulting casualties.

Among the heavy guns behind Vlamertinghe there was a giant, to which all who were engaged in the digging paid at least one visit. This was 'Granny,' the first of the big 15-inch howitzers to reach the British front. There were as yet only two other such guns in France. 'Granny's' arrival was an earnest of the output from the new heavy gun and shell factories giving results; and to encourage the public at home, the official Press Bureau sent her portrait out to the illustrated papers, and the big howitzer became famous. 'Granny' fired only in the daytime, for her huge

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three-quarter-ton shells were too costly, and as yet too scarce, to be used for any mere random shooting. The targets were out of sight, miles away, and spotting had to be used to regulate the firing, with an observation post far to the front, or an aeroplane, fitted with wireless, noting the result as it hovered high in air.

The giant howitzer was in position in a farmyard 600 yards in front of the diggers' camp. Visitors mostly saw very little of the gun, for it fired only a few rounds on selected days, and at other times was covered up with tarpaulins and green boughs.

An officer of the Bays, who was a painstaking and graphic diarist, and was lucky enough to visit the farm when 'Granny' was in action, gives an impression of what he saw there. The giant was firing at some German naval guns on the other side of Ypres, beyond Hill 60, some 8 or more miles away.

'It is most interesting,' he says, 'to watch the loading operations. A system of pulleys and chains, forming a small crane, is attached to the gun, and the shell, which weighs 1406 pounds, is hoisted by this crane on to a sort of shoot, whence it is manœuvred into the breech, and finally forced into position, by about six men with a ramrod. A big reel of cordite is then put in behind the shell, and the breech is closed. The gun is then laid. This is very quickly done, and when finished the muzzle is cocked right up into the air at quite a sharp angle. Now the gunners (there are about twenty or thirty men attached to the gun) get right away, and the gun is fired electrically from a little outhouse among the farm buildings. A small telephone hut receives information about the results of the shot, either from a forward observer or from an aeroplane fitted with wireless.

'It is astonishing how quickly the gun can be laid and

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fired, considering the weight of the shell. The noise when she goes off is terrific, and the dust flies in all directions. The vibration has shaken every tile off the roofs of the farm buildings. The shell can be seen flying through the air, and makes a noise like a train as it cuts through the air. This noise can be heard for nearly the whole of the shell's journey over Hill 60.'

The Germans had also their giant guns, and a good many of them. Visitors to Vlamertinghe could see tokens of their power in a number of huge shell-craters near the village, some of them 20 feet deep and 50 yards in circumference. The village itself showed abundant marks of shelling in cratered roadways and houses tumbled into mere rubbish heaps. When the German gunners were trying for it, the place was decidedly 'unhealthy,' and drivers accelerated their pace as they went through it.

The supply of working parties to the Vlamertinghe camp meant much extra work for those left in billets about Hardifort. There were days when every man had to look after four or even six horses. But time was found for some useful training. A short rifle range was improvised, and groups of officers received instruction from the Royal Engineers in demolitions, improvised bridge-making and other side-shows of campaigning.

There were short leaves to England. The officers managed to play some polo, with the handicap of ground so rough that a small football had to be used. Long rides all over the district supplied further exercise. Enterprising riders sometimes made a forty- or fifty-miles' excursion out and home, through the labyrinth of canal and water cuts on the flats towards Dunkirk, and by the Belgian camps to the dunes and the seashore. One could ride out three or four hundred yards into the sea from the gently shelving beach, with usually a sight of monitors and trawlers of the

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Dunkirk flotilla cruising slowly or anchored outside the 'Flanders banks.'

The Divisional Supply Column at Arneke, officers and men of the R.A.S.C., made a very welcome and successful contribution to the recreation of all ranks by organising a concert and dramatic company, known as 'Les Choses.' They had some musicians amongst them, including an exceptionally good amateur violinist in the person of their French interpreter. There were two or three who had had the advantage of experience behind the footlights of London variety theatres before the call to arms made them soldiers. One of them proved to be a first-rate stage manager. A large shed at Arneke station was converted into a theatre. The Royal Engineers supplied the electric lighting. An artist, with large tarpaulins for his canvasses, provided very fair scenery. The orchestra started with a troop of mouth-organ performers, but soon developed into something more ambitious, and long before the season at Arneke ended there was an array of violins, wood and brass wind instruments, and drums, directed by a conductor in a dress-suit imported from London!

The audience came from all parts of the billeting area. Officers arrived in motor-cars, rank and file in lorries. There were gala nights, when the front seats were crowded with officers of all ranks, with a General in the middle of the first row. There would be a good programme, and everything was so well organised that it was strange to realise that the whole show was within hearing of the distant mutter of gun-fire round the Ypres salient. A standing joke in one of the comic interludes was the question: 'Is it true there is a war going on?' and the reply, 'Well, I have heard rumours of something of the kind.'

August brought a gradually decreasing demand for diggers at the Vlamertinghe camp, and at last it ended for

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good. In and around the billeting area all ranks were now busy with war training – training for open warfare and true cavalry action, and no longer for the trenches. The course began with squadron-training, and went on to reconnaissance schemes, route marches and regimental and brigade field-days against imaginary enemies, with both mounted and dismounted action. There was the usual official secrecy as to what precisely was to happen, but soon every one knew that before long there would be a big push to break the German line somewhere on the British front, in combination with a still bigger drive by the French. There would be a 'gap' at last in the entrenched front of the invaders, and through this breach the cavalry would go forward, leading the advance to a decisive victory. Hopes ran high that the war tide was on the turn.

One of the earliest signs that serious operations were impending had come during almost the last hour of digging at Vlamertinghe camp, when visitors to 'Granny's' farmyard reported that the giant gun and its mountings were being prepared to take the road somewhere to the southwards. The concentration of heavy artillery had begun in preparation for the battle of Loos.

That battle was, for the British Expeditionary Force, its chief contribution to a series of simultaneous operations at many points on the long front extending from the Yser to Champagne. The chief effort of the French was the advance of their four armies on the front between Rheims and Verdun.

We now know much of the inner history of the prelude to these operations. The British *Official History of the War* gives a very frank and fairly full record of the long debates on the subject, in the summer of 1915, between the British and French Governments and our General Headquarters in France and the French Grand Quartier-Général. General

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Joffre and his Government insisted that there should be, in the early autumn, a combined advance of the Allies on the Western Front. The French Commander-in-Chief was confident that the result would not be limited to a mere local break in the enemy's line, but that this could be effected on such a scale that it would be followed up by the expulsion of the invaders from France. The plan of the offensive of September 1915 was his, and it was inspired by a far-reaching optimism.

In its broad outline this was the plan: The British were to make their main advance eastward against the German line north of Lens, supported on their right by the Tenth French Army in Artois, directed by Foch. The chief French advance was to be made northwards in Champagne. On the first day the enemy's line would be breached on both these fronts, and through these gaps the cavalry would lead the way to open warfare.

This converging advance of the Allies would cut off the German armies in the great salient pointing towards Paris. The final objective of the combined allied advance would be the country beyond the Belgian frontier between Mons and Namur. Not only would France be freed from the invaders, but indirectly much-needed help would be given to our Russian Allies, by forcing the enemy to hurry whole army corps from the Eastern Front in their efforts to stem the victorious advance in the west.

But Sir John French urged that the attempt should be deferred to a later date, to give time for the further training of the newly levied British armies, and render available a much larger number of heavy guns with an abundant supply of their ammunition for the preparatory bombardment and the support of the attack. He also pointed out that the sector of the enemy front assigned for the British attack was exceptionally strong, and would not, as Joffre

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suggested, open the way to country particularly favourable to the further advance. He was supported by Haig, the Commander of the First Army, which held the line facing the enemy north of Lens. After a careful study of the problem Haig gave the opinion that, with the resources available, an attack on the positions in his front was not unlikely to result in a costly failure. But British opinion was overruled, and Joffre's scheme was finally accepted by both Governments early in August.

The secret of these misgivings as to the task set for Haig and the First Army in the coming offensive was well kept. Even among those who had some knowledge of them, once the matter was settled all concerned worked loyally and heartily to secure success. There were hopes that the immense force to be thrown by our Allies against the enemy's front in Champagne would prevent the Germans from heavily reinforcing their line between Lens and the La Bassée Canal, and steps were taken which, it was hoped, would compensate for our shortness of heavy artillery by the use of gas as an immediate prelude to the assault. In the same spirit of doing everything that might be needed to make the most of a success, if after all a 'gap' was made in the hostile line on our front, a scheme for the action of the cavalry was carefully elaborated, and communicated to the higher commanders of the mounted arm in strictest confidence.

Squadron leaders and all lower ranks could only conjecture what precise form the hoped-for break-through would take. Rumour was naturally busy, and at one time there were reports that the cavalry would be moved northward for a break-through in Flanders. Orders were issued for the equipment and supplies to be carried, and only the first line of transport was to follow the mounted troops in their first moves.

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The scheme for the hoped-for intervention of the cavalry may be thus briefly outlined. The 1st and 2nd Cavalry Division were to move southwards, and concentrate in the district between Thérouanne on the upper Lys and Lillers. About the latter place there would be a concentration of all available buses and some motor-lorries, which would be used to hurry up an infantry force in support of the cavalry advance. It was expected that the most likely place for the 'gap' would be on the German front between Loos and Hulluch. If the line was thus breached, the 1st and 2nd Cavalry Brigades would push forward through the gap. Their action was thus outlined in the 'General Instructions' issued by General Headquarters on September 18:

'The general mission of the Cavalry Corps will be to pursue the enemy and to prevent him from re-establishing connection between his forces north of the break and those to the south.

'With these objects in view it will move through the First Army front and will secure the crossings over the Haute Deule Canal between Douai and Courrières, both inclusive, and then, moving by the north side of Douai, seize the crossings over the Scheldt between Condé and Tournai (both inclusive) as quickly as possible, cutting the railways, Valenciennes–Lille and Ath–Lille.'

It was added that the cavalry would act, as far as possible, in close combination with General Conneau's cavalry corps of the French Tenth Army, which was to advance south of Douai, in the direction of the line Condé–le Quesnoy (10 miles south-east of Valenciennes). Circumstances might, however, require that the French cavalry would follow the British, or the latter be sent to support Conneau's force in a break-through on the French Tenth Army front.

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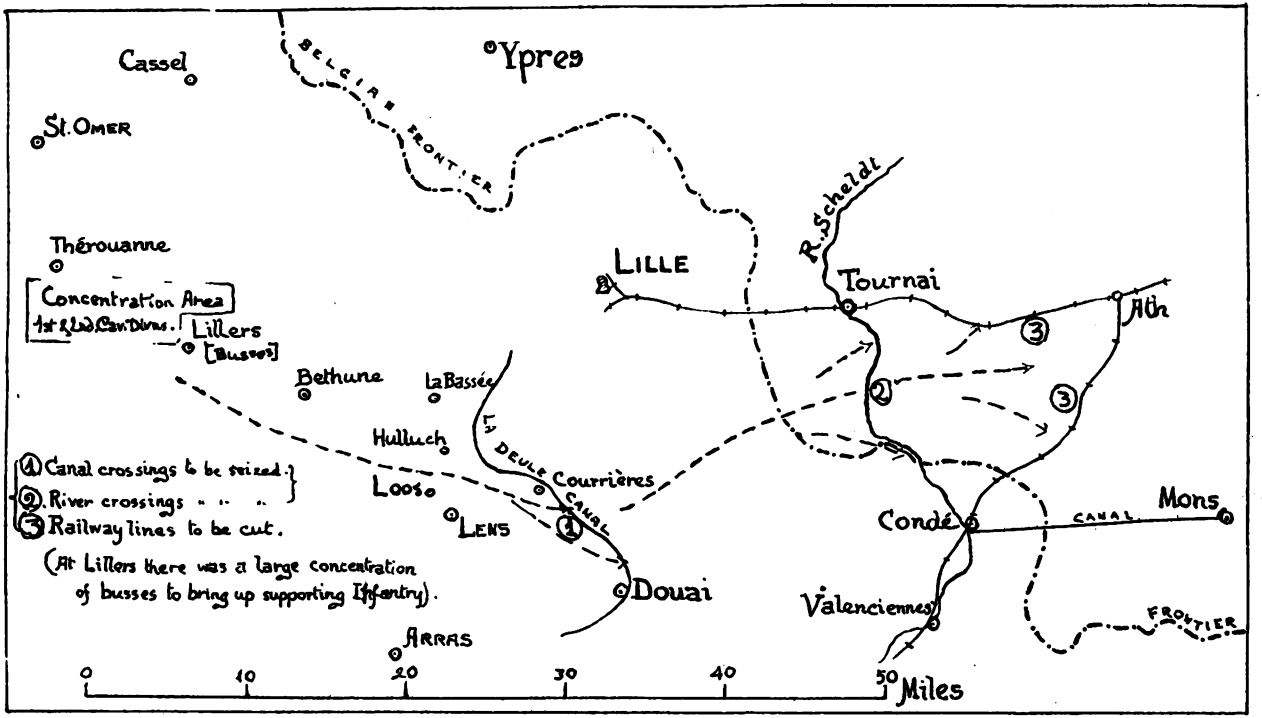

Ch. XX. (23)

—Project for Advance of Cavalry. Sept. 25. 1915.—

Queen's Bays. Chap. XX.

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The annexed sketch will make the projected action of the British cavalry clear.

The Bays began their march southwards to the cavalry concentration area on Thursday, September 23, after a preliminary parade and a short route-march, in full marching order – 'gap organisation' – two days before.

The concentration of the British forces before the battle of Loos was made by night marches, in order to conceal as far as possible from the enemy's airmen the direction in which the great blows were to be struck and the details of the forces to be engaged. As to the general fact that a tremendous allied offensive was being prepared, the Germans had already full warning by the beginning of the intensive bombardments that preceded it for many days and nights. The thunder of the immense concentration of French artillery in Champagne could be heard in Belgium, and it was obvious that on that side the main attack was to be expected. The comparatively small force that opposed the British attack on the first day of the battle suggests that no very serious operations were expected on the Loos–La Bassée front, and the night marches thus obtained their object.

At midday on the 23rd, it had become 'unofficially' known that the coming move was to be to billets on the upper Lys between Thérouanne and Aire. At 8.45 p.m. the Regiment paraded at Rubrucq (west of Arneke), where it had been lately billeted, marched to join the Brigade at its rendezvous, and then took the lead in a night march. The whole distance to be covered was only 16 miles, but it was near dawn on the 24th before the Brigade reached its destination. The general direction was southward, but nowhere on the assigned route was any direct main road available. The march was by cross-roads, often narrow country lanes, crossing the lines of the great roads radiating

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north-east and south-east from St. Omer, and passing through the villages and hamlets of the district – little out-of-the-way places of a region of Franco-Flemish farm-lands.

A squadron of the Bays led the way in the darkness through this labyrinth of country roads. The officer commanding its rear troop had the duty of detaching a man at every point where there was the chance of the units that followed taking the wrong direction in the dark at a branching road, and thus getting astray and even leading the rest of the long column off its track. The march was first south-eastwards, crossing the road and railway from Cassel to St. Omer near Zuytpeene village; then south, crossing on the way the high road from St. Omer to Cassel, and turning sharply to the south-west at the hamlet of Staple; then by Ebblinghen, where there was another crossing over the railway and the road from St. Omer to Hazebrouck. At these crossings convoys of the roads and trains on the line meant wearisome and confusing halts. Through Wardecques and Quistede the march ended at last, as the day was coming, at Ecques, about 6 miles north-west of Aire.

It had been a pitch-dark night, with a cloudy sky, and at intervals showers of heavy rain. Men and horses were tired out. No one had much chance of a rest on the busy day before a first night march, and even if they have the chance, men seldom lie down to sleep. As for the horses, moving continuously for hours at a slow walk with occasional checks is very tiring for them. On this occasion they were saddled up for about nine hours. At Ecques they were picketed in a muddy field where other troops had been before. The men were billeted in and around the place, and the two other regiments of the Brigade in adjacent villages.

There was a rest during the day at Ecques, and that evening the parade for another night march – a short one

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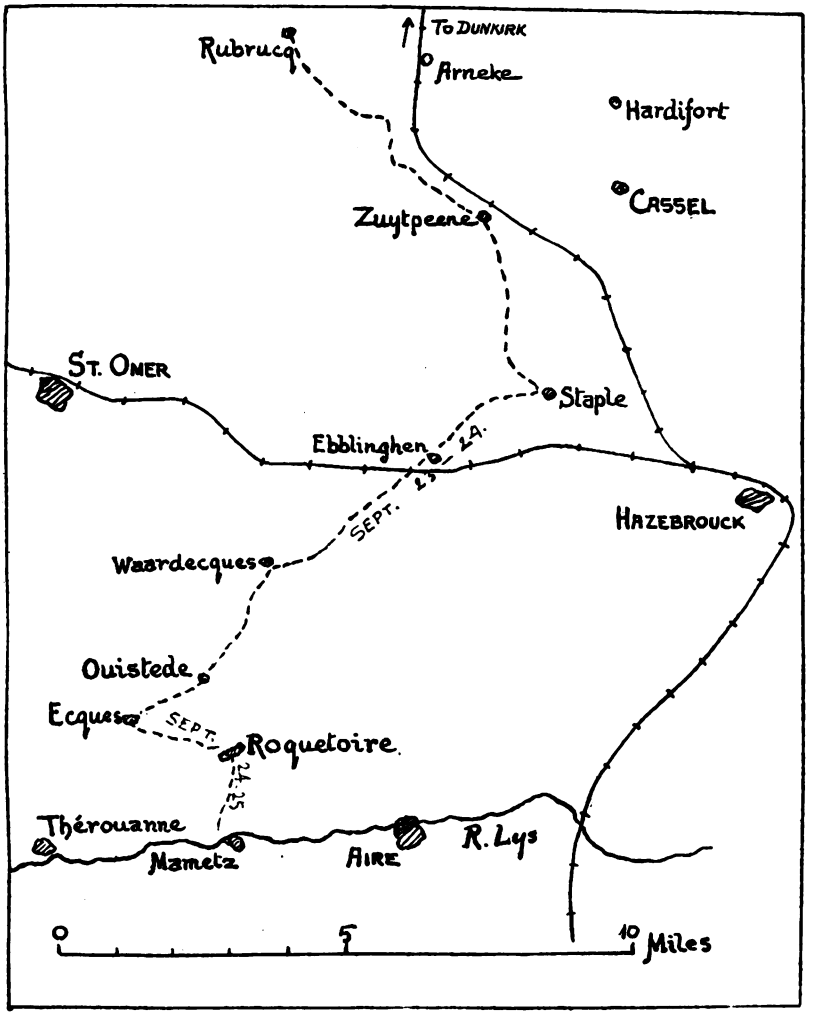

Ch. XX. (22) — The Night Marches before the Battle of Loos. —

— Sept. 23/24 & 24/25 1915. —

Queen's Boys. Chapter XX

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of only 5 or 6 miles through Roquetoire to billets at Mamêtz on the Lys between Thérouanne and Aire.

At six o'clock next morning – Saturday, September 25 – officers and men, sleeping after the night march, were roused by a tremendous cannonade – a solid volume of sound that shook the air like a continuous thunder-peal, in which no individual reports could be distinguished. It was the intensified bombardment from our massed batteries some 20 miles away to the south-east – the immediate prelude to the attack at Loos.

During the day, officers' patrols pushed out to eastward and reconnoitred the various lines of road by which the cavalry might be called upon to advance. While they were still out, cyclists were sent to guide them to a new rendezvous, the Regiment having been ordered that afternoon to move by Blessy to the Bois des Dames, south-west of Béthune, where the 1st Cavalry Brigade was concentrating on the margin of the Lens mining district.

All day the sound of battle came from the eastward, and in the afternoon and evening there were rumours of a great victory, with the capture of large numbers of prisoners. Hopes rose high that the promised 'gap' was being opened in the hostile barrier and that the order for an advance would soon arrive. Late in the evening an official *communiqué* was circulated. The village of Loos had been stormed, a large portion of the enemy's front line captured; on our right the French had made some progress, and their main army in Champagne had rushed the first German trench line and secured thousands of prisoners. It was the news that set all England rejoicing when the Sunday papers appeared next morning.

It was only much later that it became generally known that such success as had been gained was partial and disappointing. The German right held fast, and though their

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trenches had been stormed on the right, the attack made no impression on their strong second line. They had not expected any serious attack on this front. It was anticipated that any British action would be little more than a diversion to help the main French advance. The enemy force in this sector was about equivalent to a single division, but it held on against the advance of our seven divisions, and before evening their reserves were coming up, while ours, left too far back, were not available till next day.

The 1st Cavalry Brigade was now assembled along the western margin of the Bois des Dames. The Bays were in bivouac about the village of La Volville near a railway junction of the colliery lines south-west of Béthune. The place was really a small group of miserable little houses.

The diary of one of the officers gives some impressions of this expectant halt at La Volville:

'*Sunday, September* 26. – Here we are waiting in a "position of readiness" to go through the "gap." The horses are pegged down in mass on a sloping field near the junction at La Volville. The men are living and sleeping in among the horses. On these occasions they manage to make themselves quite comfortable. They put their saddles up on end to form a sort of head rest, and at night sleep on waterproof sheets, covered with their blankets, which are carried under the saddle with the horse blankets when on the move. As long as the weather is fine they are all right if it is not too cold, but in cold, wet weather it is far from pleasant.

'We did not move from here all day. All the officers of the regiment crowded into an estaminet for meals. Awful squash, but there is no great choice of places to go to, there being only five or six houses in the whole place. I and several others spent the afternoon lying on the hillside

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R.Q.M.S. Smith R.S.M. Turner Sad.-Sergt. Reeves

IN BILLETS NEAR FLETRE, 1915

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above the horse lines, reading and sleeping. Very heavy gun-fire in the direction of Lens all the afternoon. Gray and I walked up to the top of the hill in the evening to see if we could see anything of the battle-line, which is only about seven or eight miles from here, but owing to a mist, nothing could be made out. A fine sunny day, to-day, and everything is drying up well after the rain yesterday.

'Dinner at the dirty estaminet to-day – twelve of us at one small round table, and the rest in any odd corner of the room. I slept on the hill above the horse lines on a waterproof sheet in a blanket and great-coat. Our valises are with the second line transport and consequently not get-at-able. The transport is, I believe, parked at or near Mamêtz, and we will not see it again for some time if we go through the "gap." '

On Monday, the 27th, heavy firing from the eastward told that the battle was in full blast, and the Brigade was warned to be ready to move to the front at three hours' notice. Rumours circulated that all was going well, but that it was 'a tough job' and losses were heavy. Officers who took a short walk up the Bethune road told how they had seen a convoy of German prisoners, many of them young fellows, almost boys. Hopes ran high that the expected 'gap' would soon be effected. But the 'fog of war' was dense even so near the front.

Things were not going well. On Monday there were local losses of ground already won. The enemy was being reinforced and made more than one vigorous counter-attack. The British reserves were coming into action. Two new divisions, the 21st and 24th, lately arrived in France, and who had not even had the hardening experience of trench warfare, had been brought up by a night march. They attacked shortly before noon on the Monday, but

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they went to pieces and came streaming back in confusion, to be rallied on the old British line. 'We did not know what it was like, but we shall do better next time,' said the men. Both divisions did well in subsequent battles. They had been unwisely sent into action under difficult conditions, and without adequate training or preparatory war experience. In the afternoon the Guards Division came into action, and on the Tuesday some ground was won, and that day began the digging of a new trench line, facing the positions held by the enemy. It was the first stage of a new deadlock. The weather had broken on Monday. There were hours of heavy rain. The horse lines of the Bays were 6 inches deep in mud.

Of all this, though it was happening a few miles away, nothing was known in the cavalry camps and bivouacs by the Bois des Dames. Current rumours were as optimistic as the censored dispatches that appeared in the London and Paris papers. There was still hope of the 'gap,' and on Tuesday morning every one thought it had come at last. The Bays were roused up in the dark at 4.15 a.m., and had orders to saddle up and 'stand to,' ready to move at a moment's notice. But at 5.30 the order was cancelled. Probably the intention had been to send the Regiment up into the line to stiffen it with a dismounted reinforcement. The 6th Cavalry Brigade had been already used in this way on our right near Loos. The little town, badly damaged by our bombardment before the battle, had been burning since the Saturday night, when it was fired by the German shells.

At La Volville it was a quiet day. In the morning the Brigadier paid a visit and went round the horse lines. A welcome change was the move of the officers' mess from the wretched estaminet to a farmhouse.

On Wednesday, the 29th, at 11 a.m., there came a

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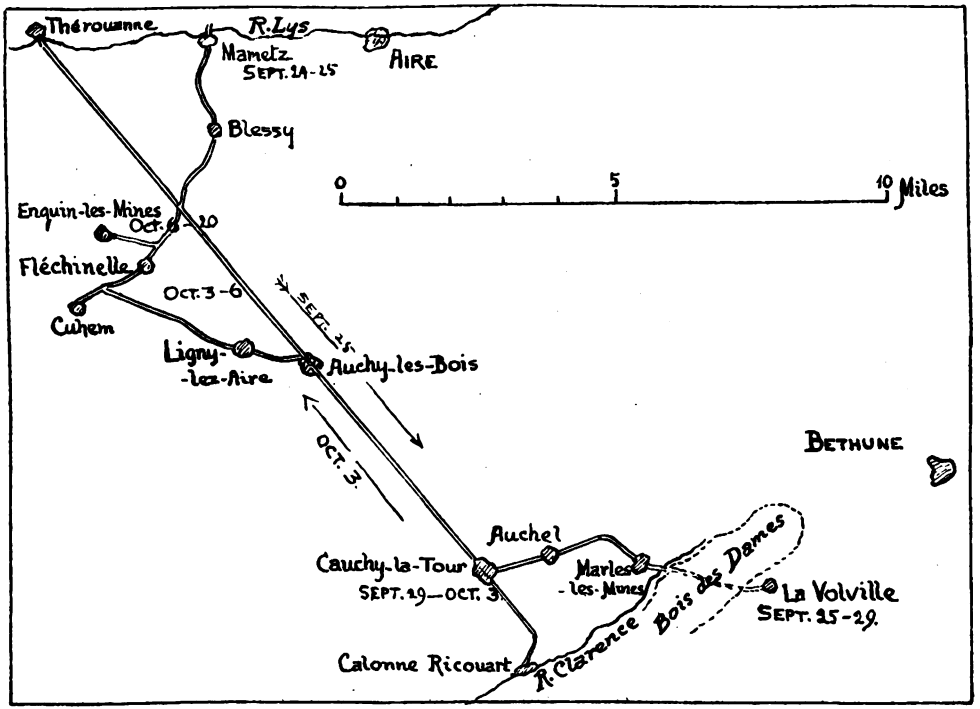

Ch. XX. (24) —Billets & Moves during the Battle of Loos.—

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sudden order to move at twenty minutes' notice. The actual order to march was given just before noon. But instead of 'marching to the sound of the cannon, which was keeping up a continuous roar away to eastward, the move was westward, through the woods and by the villages of Marles-des-Mines and Auchel to Cauchy-la-Tour, on the main road to the crossing of the Lys near Thérouanne. The march was through a colliery country, with many slag-heaps and tall headworks of the mines, and light, narrow-gauge railways crossing or running beside the road. It was a cold, rainy day, and it was a change for the better to find that Cauchy and the farmsteads near it gave plenty of room for getting all the men into dry billets. Water supplies were, unfortunately, scanty and the local ponds foul. The horses had to be sent to water nearly 2 miles away at Calonne-Picouart on the little river Clarence. The object of the move was said to be to relieve the congestion of cavalry bivouacs to the eastward.

The Brigadier paid a visit to the Regiment in the afternoon, when it had settled down into its billets. He told the officers that the French had broken the last German line in Champagne, and their cavalry had gone through. Cheering news, but unfortunately based on false reports. The French were held by the enemy's second line, with heavy loss and no gain.

On the British front, fighting continued, with no important results. The *Official History of the War* makes the battle of Loos end on October 13, when the front settled down into the conditions of trench warfare. On October 2, the diarist already quoted had noted in his journal:

'A lot of our officers are beginning to doubt if there is any chance of breaking the German line either on our front or on the French front. However, I still go on hoping.'

That day a party of 4 officers and 100 men of the Bays

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had been sent off in buses to Vermelles, about 2 miles north-west of Loos and close to the fighting front. They were to assist in the work of clearing up the battlefield in the immediate rear of our advance.

Next day, October 3, there was a move to new billets still farther from the front. It was a beautiful sunny day, with a cool wind. The Bays marched off at 6.30 a.m. to the north-westward, through open, undulating country by way of Auchy-au-Bois and Ligny-lez-Aires to Fléchinelle, where they arrived at 11.15 a.m. Billets for all ranks were poor and comfortless, and while it was fine the men mostly slept in the open. For the horses, there was a grassy field with a good stream of water at one end of it.

The 'battlefield clearing' party returned early on the 5th. They had worked during the nights, spending most of the day in the captured portion of the old German first line, where they found wonderful dug-outs, some of them 30 feet underground. Part of the work to be done was reversing and repairing the captured trenches, but most of it was bringing in the dead that had been lying for days on the ground, securing identification discs and other property on them, and burying them. Some of the younger men found it a very trying task, and no one welcomed it. The dead were mostly Scottish on the ground over which the Bays' party worked. There were very few Germans. The workers were often under shell-fire, but the Bays had no casualties. Amongst other parties engaged in the work were a lot of men of the new armies. Our diarist notes that: 'It must have been rather a disheartening job for new soldiers to be turned on to burying the corpses of their own side, before they had ever been in action themselves, and I should have thought it would not have been the best thing in the world for their morale. However, presumably there were no more old campaigners available.'

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On the 6th, there was a move to slightly better, but still crowded billets about a mile away at Enquin-les-Mines. A useful and welcome feature of the place was a football ground, with sockets for the goal-posts all ready. It had been prepared by troops billeted there some time before. At Enquin, training was resumed in a form that suggested that trench warfare was again in prospect. There was instruction and practice in the use of various kind of bombs, and training in the art of bombing up the trenches of a dummy position at Cuhem, about 2 miles away to the southward. Obviously the hope of a 'gap' had vanished for the present. The weather was breaking, with cold nights and showery days, and the battle of Loos was ending. The 'gap' could be hoped for, at the soonest, when the spring or summer of 1916 would bring another big push to break the German line.

The remaining weeks of 1915 were uneventful. On October 20 the Regiment left Enquin to go into winter quarters, and moved to rest-billets on the high ground about Lottinghem, 12½ miles east of Boulogne, on the main road from that place to St. Omer. Regimental Headquarters and the Machine-gun Section were in Lottinghem. A Squadron was in billet near Lottinghem and at the village of Velinghem, B Squadron at Escouilles, and C Squadron at Quesques.

The Regiment remained in these quarters till November 16, when there was a move a little farther south to billets in the valley of the Canche about Montreuil, and within 7 miles of the sea at Étaples. Regimental Headquarters, with A Squadron and the Machine-gun Section, were, in and around the little town of Neuville, on the north bank of the Canche opposite Montreuil, B Squadron at Marles, and C Squadron at Marant.

During the first period of their stay here, the Bays

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on our trench maps as 'Big Willie' and 'Little Willie.' The Redoubt had been gallantly stormed on the first day of the battle of Loos. In the following weeks there was intermittent fighting for it, with much loss of life on both sides. On October 13, the day of the last British assault on the German positions, it was recaptured by an enemy counter-attack, our men holding on only to its extreme salient, across which an inner trench had been dug.

In the subsequent weeks of ordinary trench fighting on this front, our position before the Redoubt was always 'lively' and often distinctly 'unhealthy.' During the six weeks from the beginning of January 1916 to the middle of February, the dismounted detachment of the Bays held the trenches here in a series of short tours of duty. When withdrawn from them for a brief rest, they went back to Noyelles or Labrousse, and once to the quiet billets of Béthune.

In the first week of January they took over trenches in front of the Redoubt and 'Little Willie' from a Territorial division, whose units had been heavily reduced in strength during a prolonged stay on the Loos front. They were shorthanded and overworked; the weather had been bad, and the Bays found the trenches in a wretched condition. These were in many places almost impassable with accumulated mud and slush, often 2 feet deep. Clearing them up was heavy work. After some strenuous digging, the duck-board level was reached. The boards were got out and the lower stratum of mud cleared away, and the duck-boards relaid; but even then, water accumulated in the trenches. Enemy snipers were active during this period of reconditioning the line, but vigorous measures were taken to deal with them, with successful results.

Captain Kingstone, who was acting as Adjutant of the dismounted 'battalion,' writes of this stay in the line:

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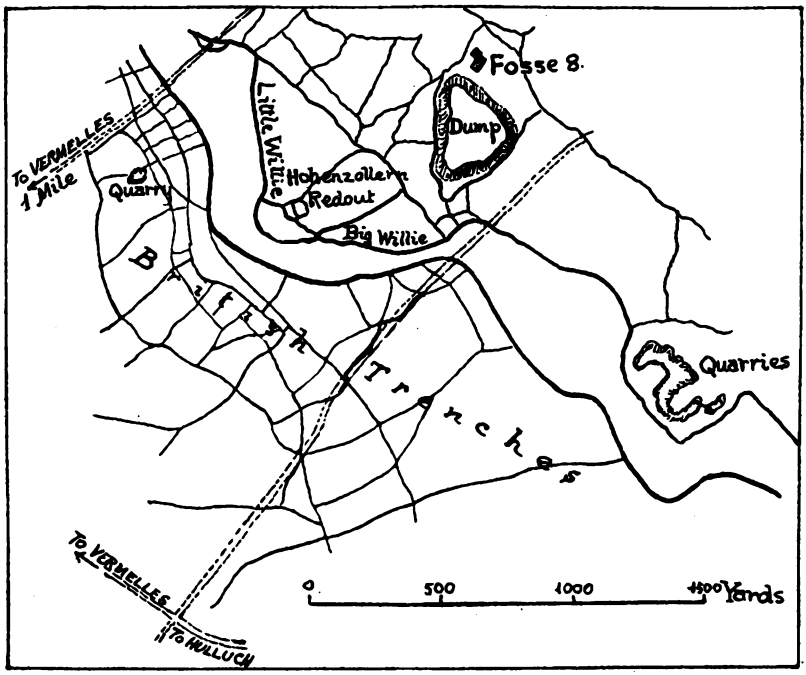

Ch. XX. (25) — Before the Hohenzollern Redout. (Jan.-Feb. 1916) —

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'The trench system was very complicated, and the whole of the area which we took over was overlooked by German observation posts on the big slag-heap at Fosse 8. One could not move about very much by day, but at night the whole place was full of activity with ration parties, trench working-parties, etc., and as we had taken over the line in a very bad way, there was plenty to do. Nothing very startling happened during the first part of our time there, but there was always a good deal of bombing and patrol fighting going on at night. One place in particular, a small quarry about an acre in extent and three or four hundred yards behind the front line, was always rather unpleasant. It was used for dumping rations and materials, and there were always people moving about in it at night. Apparently the Germans knew this, because every night it was intermittently shelled or machine-gunned.

'We lost a good number of men. When visiting that part of the world in the summer of 1925, I found that the quarry had been turned into a cemetery, and there were at least twelve of our men buried there, together with four or five graves of unknown men of the Bays.'

On February 13, the dismounted force having been broken up, the detachment returned to Neuville. Towards the end of March, Regimental Headquarters were transferred to Montcavrel, and the Bays were billeted there and at Recques, C Squadron remaining at Estrées. This move was the result of Montreuil and Neuville having been commandeered by Sir Douglas Haig. Just before the New Year he had taken over the command of the British Expeditionary Force from Sir John French, and at the end of March, General Headquarters were transferred from St. Omer to Montreuil, where they remained till the end of the war.

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On March 29 the Regiment supplied a party of 2 officers and 89 other ranks for employment with the First Army. The party was billeted at Verdrel, about 7 miles south of Béthune, and was absent on this detachment duty till June 19. For six weeks in April and May, Major Ing, who had been acting as the Second-in-Command of the Bays, was away from the Regiment, in charge of a school for training yeomanry and cyclists detachments of the First Army at Hesdin l'Abbé, near Boulogne.

In the first days of June preparations began for a move to the front, and there were again hopes of a 'gap' in the enemy line and opportunities for real cavalry action. The great effort of 1916 was imminent, and the months of hard fighting, known as the 'battle of the Somme,' were about to begin. At the end of the third week of June the Regiment was concentrated at Montcavrel, and on the 24th began a series of four night marches. The first move was to Roussent. Willencourt was reached on the 25th, St. Ouen on the 26th, and Querrieu, 15 miles east of Amiens, on the 27th.

Since the early winter of 1914, the entrenched lines of the invaders and the Allies had stretched from the North Sea to the Swiss frontier, near Belfort, with only minor local changes in their position – these being the result of unsuccessful attempts at a break-through, now by the Germans, now by the French and British. On February 21, 1916, the enemy had begun a formidable effort to break through at Verdun – a critical point in the allied line. Here there was a marked salient in the trench barrier, which, after running west to east from near Noyon, turned to the south-westward along the fortress line of eastern France. A break-through here by the enemy would have outflanked two fronts of the allied defence, and opened the way to the traditional line of advance on Paris by the Marne valley.

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For months the fate of Verdun hung in the balance. The British gave some help by taking over the whole front from Ypres to the Somme valley, and thus enabling the French Tenth Army to be withdrawn from the Arras sector. It had already been arranged that the allied effort to break the line in the coming summer should be made in the Somme valley, the first objective being the plateau between the river and its tributary the Ancre, which joins the Somme between Albert and Amiens. This high ground had been held by the enemy since October 1914, and elaborately fortified.

The continuous pressure of the German attack on Verdun all through the spring and the early summer, the heavy losses incurred in the defence and resultant drain on the French reserves meant that the main effort in the Somme valley would devolve on the British armies. Our attack was to be made about midsummer, to give ample time for the gigantic preparations required by the scale on which it was planned. The force employed was the greatest that had ever yet been arrayed under the British flag. Time was required to accumulate the vast supplies of ammunition for the artillery and to complete the training of the new divisions that were now moving month after month across the Channel. More than once the French Government urged that the date should be anticipated, in order to bring, as soon as possible, indirect relief to hard-pressed Verdun. At a conference of the allied leaders in London on June 9, General Joffre, speaking for the French Staff, declared that it was doubtful if the defence of the place could be maintained for another month. But it was wisely decided that the offensive on the Somme should not be precipitated. The blow must not be struck till an overwhelming force could be accumulated and success assured.

After a preparatory bombardment on a scale that had

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never yet been attempted, the first assault was to be made by five British Army Corps on a front of nearly 20 miles from the high ground held by the enemy on the right bank of the Ancre to beyond the salient near Albert. The Sixth French Army, under Fayolle, would support us by attacking on both sides of the Somme, prolonging the line for another 6 or 7 miles to the southward.

There were high hopes of victory. Our men, as they concentrated for the great battle – old Regulars, Territorials and the new divisions of 'Kitchener's armies' – never looked forward to a fight in better spirits. It was to end once and for all the weariness of trench warfare, and clear the way for the long-expected advance to open warfare and decisive successes.

So once more the mounted troops confidently expected the ride through a 'gap' in the enemy lines. The force available for this was the largest army of horsemen that had been seen in European war for more than a hundred years. Between Amiens and the long lines of our batteries the country was full of the billets, camps and bivouacs of the cavalry. At Querrieu in the early morning of July 1 – a bright, sunny day – the Bays with the rest of the 1st Cavalry Brigade waited eagerly for the order to move forward, while the last of the long bombardment swept down on the enemy lines. At 7.30 a.m. the allied infantry advanced to the assault on a front of nearly 30 miles, and the Brigade went forward along the Albert road to Bresle (5 miles from Albert), where it was held ready for a further advance. It was expected that by noon the first German line would be broken, somewhere about the enemy salient facing Albert.

The morning and the early hours of the afternoon went by, and still no orders came, but there were encouraging reports of success. German prisoners were being sent back, and the infantry were reported to be gaining ground at

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many points. At last, at 5 p.m., orders came, but they were disappointing. The Brigade was to go back to Querrieu.

There had been no break-through. On the British left, at the Gommecourt salient on the west side of the Ancre, and against the Thiepval heights on its east bank, the attack had failed. In the centre, on both sides of the Albert-Bapaume road, there had been some slight gains. On the right, at the salient near Albert, there had been a little progress, but in the deep fortifications of the hostile line, where (despite the intense bombardment) every ruined village and shell-torn wood was still a fortress of trenches and barbed wire, only a beginning had been made in the long task of forcing our way forward almost yard by yard. And failure and success had alike meant enormous losses. The battle of the Somme was to be less a battle than a series of battles–endless trench fighting, attacks and counter-attacks–something like a colossal siege lasting for months.

The Bays remained at Querrieu until July 4. Then most of the mounted troops were withdrawn to billets in the villages north-west of Amiens. The hope of a 'gap' had been deferred, but it was expected that when the first German line was mastered, the chance of open warfare would come again.

The Bays were billeted until July 10 at La Folie, and then marched up again with the Brigade to Querrieu. The British effort had been concentrated on the salient south of the Bapaume road, and we were slowly winning our way through the mile-wide belt of the first line German entrenched positions. On July 13 the Brigade left Querrieu and crossed the river Ancre to Ville, south of Albert, where orders were to be ready to move forward at half an hour's notice. On the 15th the order came to push on to Méaulte. To have got so far forward suggested prospects of soon coming into action, for through Méaulte had been for thousands the gateway to the fighting front.

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It was a village and road junction facing the point of the enemy salient at Fricourt, now in our hands. Eastward, a narrow valley ran up into the plateau. A brook, an unmetalled country road, and a light railway (now under repair) followed the line of the hollow beyond the ruins of Fricourt, through Mamêtz (captured on July 1) to Carnoy, a village that had been inside our original line before the battle began.

The Germans were now holding a second line along the high ground of the broad ridge that runs south-eastward from the Thiepval heights to the hollow about Combles. Begun before the battle, this line had been strengthened by working day and night since July 1. But it was at first regarded as probably little more than an improvised rear-guard position, and there were hopes that there would be a break-through when it was seriously attacked. But it was three months before it was won, and by then another strong line had grown up beyond it along the Bapaume heights.

The first attacks on the second line revealed the strength of the enemy's position and the determined energy and resource with which it was held. Progress was slow, and gains limited. On July 24 the Bays went back to Querrieu, leaving a digging-party of an officer and 72 men to work with the 18th Corps on the communications of the advanced attack. The Regiment remained at Querrieu till August 9, when the whole of the 1st Cavalry Brigade was again withdrawn to the north-west of Amiens, where the Bays, after a day's stay at Flexicourt, were billeted in and around Monchaux. Here they remained till September 6. The digging-party rejoined the Regiment on August 31.

September brought another move to the front. Some progress had been made against the enemy's second line, and an attack in force on a broad front was being prepared. It was hoped that at last there would be a rapid break-

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through, thanks to the employment of a new and formidable weapon of which the secret had been well kept. It was expected that it would smash a way through the German barrier like a battering-ram breaching a brick wall.

On September 6 the Bays marched from Flexicourt to Longpré, and next day the 1st Cavalry Brigade was concentrated at Daours, north of Amiens. Then followed a move across the Ancre and by Méaulte, up the valley to near Carnoy, where the Bays bivouacked as the leading regiment of the Brigade on the evening of the 14th. In the dusk they saw some of the new engines of war – the first of the 'tanks' – crawling forward to their starting-points for the battle of next day. The batteries on the high ground above the hollow of Carnoy kept a rapid fire to drown the clattering and droning of these giant 'war chariots,' for it was all important that the Germans should have no warning of what was being prepared for them.

The British attack of September 15 was made on a front of about 7 miles. Our line that morning ran west to east from a point north of Pozières, across the Bapaume road, through High Wood, on the crest of the heights (a point still partly held by the enemy), and then just north of Longueval and Delville Wood, to Ginchy, where it curved away to the southward above the Combles hollow.

On the left and centre there was success. The villages of Courcelette and Martinpuich were captured; High Wood was cleared of the enemy; Flers village stormed, with little opposition, a tank waddling up its ruined main street in front of our advance. By evening our line had been pushed forward to an average depth of 1 mile on a front of 6 miles. It was only on the right that our attack on the German lines between Ginchy and Lesboeufs was held, and despite reckless courage on the part of our infantry – Guards, Regulars and Territorials – ended in failure, with heavy losses.

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It was here that, for the first and last time, the Bays had a part in the battle of the Somme. At daybreak they were waiting hopefully in the Carnoy valley for the order to go forward as the vanguard of the Brigade. At 9.30 a.m., orders came for a move closer up to the right attack, and the Regiment made its way about a mile eastward to another hollow of the heights, the valley of Favrière Wood, in rear of the right attack. Major Pinching, M.C., with A Squadron, was pushed forward over a swell of the ground to near Leuze Wood, to keep touch with the advance and report progress. The squadron halted south-west of Leuze Wood and close up to it. It was now a wilderness of shattered trees mostly stripped of their branches. Fighting was going on close at hand. Two infantry brigades were clearing the prolongation of Leuze Wood to the north-eastwards, the 'Bois des Bouleaux,' and their firing lines extended right and left of it. Two patrols under Second Lieutenant Macnaughten and Second Lieutenant Yeatherd were sent out to keep touch with them. The position was the centre of the right attack. Yeatherd's patrol advancing dismounted on the north side of Leuze Wood, came under heavy fire and was badly cut up. Yeatherd was reported missing, until his body was found a week later and buried near Ginchy. There were casualties in the squadron as well as the advanced patrols, and Major Pinching was wounded.

Once more, though the day had seen so much success, there was no break-through – no 'gap.' The battle died down in the evening, and at 6 p.m. the Bays returned to Carnoy – 'somewhat downhearted,' writes one of their officers. They had been 'waiting for the gap' for nearly two years, and hope deferred is trying.

Next day the new positions that had been won were being consolidated, and there was some heavy local fighting, when German attempts to recapture Flers and Courcelette

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THE REGIMENT FILING INTO CARNOY VALLEY. BATTLE OF THE SOMME

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were repulsed. The Bays still waited at Carnoy, but on the 18th a withdrawal began by a move back to Daours.

The record of the rest of the year may be briefly summed up. On the 23rd a further withdrawal began by way of Hangest on the Somme, to Canchy in the Canche valley, and then to Blangy on the little river Tournoise south of St. Omer. The Bays were back in the coast district where they had spent the previous winter.

On October 2 there was a move to Auchy-lez-Hesdin in the Canche valley. A fortnight was spent there, and on October 19 the Bays marched to Mezerolles and next day to Bonnevill. They had a miserable time there, for day after day there was a deluge of rain, the whole place was deep in mud, and the horses were out in the open.

A change for the better came when, on November 9, the Regiment was ordered into winter quarters in and around Montcavrel – familiar ground in the winter of 1915–6. Headquarters and C Squadron were at Montcavrel, A Squadron at Les Etenettes, and B Squadron at Alette. Here a digging-party of 2 officers and 78 other ranks, which had been away near Albert for a month, rejoined. During the stay at Montcavrel, which lasted into the New Year, Major Ing, D.S.O., with temporary rank of Lieutenant-Colonel, was in command of the 1st Cavalry Division Training School, formed at Wierre-au-Bois.

The casualties of the Regiment during 1916 were:

	Killed.	Died of Wounds.	Wounded.	Missing.	Total.
Officers . .	2	–	2	–	4
Other ranks .	12	3	33	3	51
Totals .	14	3	35	3	55

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CHAPTER XXI

Battle of Arras – Ypres once more – Battle of Cambrai (1917)

By the end of November 1916, the operations in the long series of battles popularly remembered as 'the battle of the Somme' were slowing down. Much ground had been won, and a huge salient driven into the enemy's front, which, however, though bent back, had not been broken. Our losses had been heavy, but a tremendous strain had been inflicted on the enemy, and Verdun had been saved. Nevertheless the general result was disappointing. There had been no decisive success, and no sign of the trench warfare deadlock ending.

In midwinter the British and French Governments and the Commanders on the Western Front had prolonged discussions on the plans for the New Year. The British General Headquarters had worked out a scheme for action against the enemy's right in Flanders, with a view to turning the German flank, the French assisting with a push in Champagne, and for a while it was anticipated that this British operation would be the chief element in the campaign of 1917.

But presently the Flanders plan was deferred, and the chief move in the opening of the 1917 campaign was allotted to our Ally. In October 1916, the French had begun a systematic series of local counter-attacks in front of Verdun, and in the following weeks had won back much of the ground lost in the German onslaught earlier in the year. These successful operations had been planned and directed by a young General of Division, Nivelle, and in November he had been promoted to be Commander-in-

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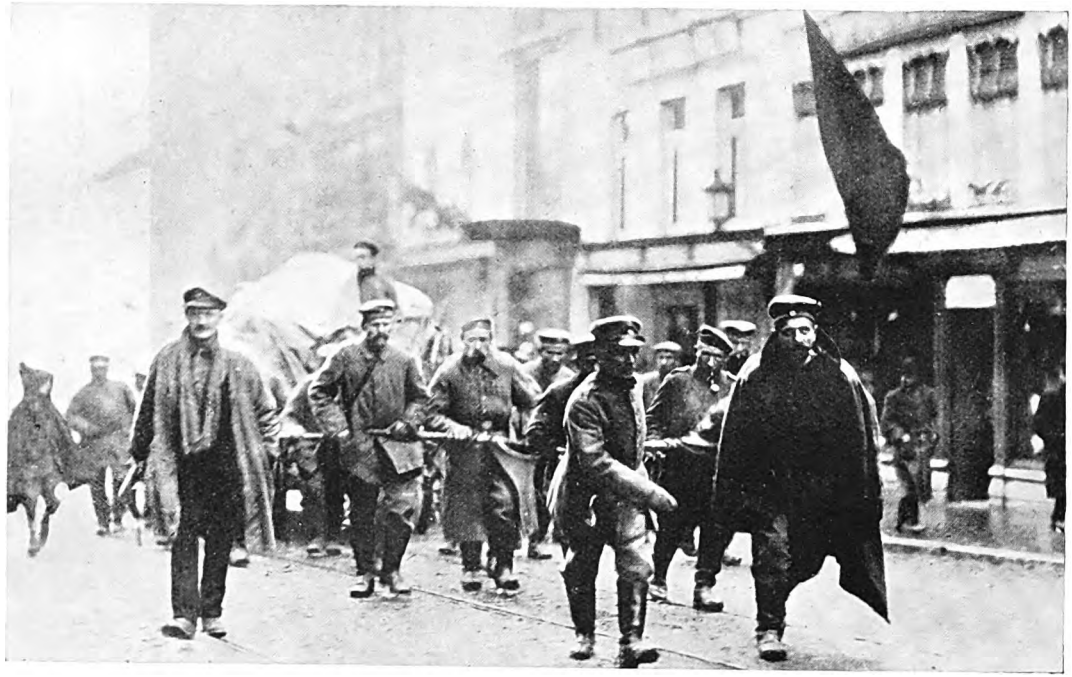

THE ENEMY RETIRING THROUGH SPA, 1918
Note lack of transport animals.

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Chief of the French armies on the Western Front. He was supposed to have discovered at last the secret of victory, and had sprung into sudden fame and popularity.

While still carrying on his operations at Verdun till the middle of December, he had elaborated and obtained the consent of his Government for an ambitious scheme for the coming year, in which the French were to play the leading part, and the British were to act as auxiliaries. Presently the British Cabinet and General Headquarters were persuaded to accept it, and such was the suddenly acquired prestige of the new leader that the proposal was canvassed of giving him supreme command of the united British and French armies; but this was an idea favoured on the British side chiefly by eminent politicians, who were pleased to meet in council a French commander who, thanks to his English mother, could speak our language fluently, and whom his admirers in the Press described as 'half an Englishman.'[1]

His plan, as originally drafted, had to be modified in points of detail in consequence of some events earlier in the New Year, though its general idea was unchanged. Haig had not left the enemy on the Somme front undisturbed even in the hard winter weather. Local offensives had gained some ground against the German right along the Ancre,

[1] A group of prominent Members in the Cabinet supported the idea, but happily wiser counsels prevailed. Sir Douglas Haig, who had anything but complete confidence in Nivelle's plan, stood firmly for the original position of the British command being safeguarded, and military opinion was on his side. Sir Henry Wilson was appointed liaison officer at Nivelle's H.Q., and joined him on March 18, 1917. In his diary of that day, Sir Henry wrote: 'I began my new work by assuring him (Nivelle) whole-heartedly that Haig would play right out to the end. This pleased him, though he could not help showing me a codicil that Haig had added to the recent agreement, in which he said that he must be treated as an ally, and not as a subordinate. This rankles in Nivelle's mind, for he assured me he had never dreamt of any other course.' – Caldwell, *Life of Sir Henry Wilson*, vol. i. p. 330.

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and their left towards Sailly-Saillisel. In the middle of February it was realised first that the enemy's line on the Somme front was not strongly held, and then that the trenches had been abandoned and a retirement was in progress on a front of several miles, covered only by small rear-guards, behind which the country was being devastated and the roads cratered by mine explosions at every cross-road and in the defile of every village. Our pursuit ended when the enemy halted on the new and singularly formidable line of works he had constructed to link up the trench system near Arras with the St. Quentin sector and the strong positions of the Aisne heights.

Nivelle's plan, modified only in details by this shortening of the German front, may be thus briefly outlined: There were to be attacks that would turn on right and left the new line, at the strong points on which it rested – on the enemy right, Vimy Ridge and the Aisne heights. The first day's fighting was to carry the French advance as far forward as Laon. There would be a wide break in the enemy front, carrying the advance out into open country. Nivelle counted on a complete debacle of the German armies rapidly following, and daringly noted as the objective of the operations the line from Mons to Namur. The British armies, after preparing the way for this swift northern drive by the French, were to act against the flanks of the Germans falling back before the victorious onset of our Allies.

In Haig's plans for co-operating in this ambitious scheme the cavalry were assigned an important part from the very outset. Even if all the far-reaching hopes of Nivelle were not realised, it was anticipated that the stronghold of the Vimy plateau would be stormed, and the German front flung back from the positions long occupied by the enemy close up to the eastern suburbs of Arras. Here the effort would be to effect a break-through along the Scarpe valley,

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PARADE FOR INSPECTION BY H.M. THE KING. FLETRE-METEREN ROAD, 1915

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and by this gap the cavalry would be pushed forward to lead the long-expected advance to 'open warfare.'

The British operations about Arras were to begin early in the spring. In the first three months of the year the Bays remained in their winter quarters about Montcavrel. They sent a detachment, however, to take part in the preparations in progress for the great advance.

A 1st Division Cavalry Pioneer Battalion had been formed to work on the railway from St. Pol to Arras. To this the Regiment contributed 6 officers and 225 of other ranks. Major Pinching, M.C., commanded the Battalion, and Captain Kingstone, M.C., the Bays company.

The Pioneers had hard work to do, in bitter winter weather. Their task was to assist in preparing this section of the line for the extra traffic it would have to carry in connection with the coming operations about Arras. New tracks were added and a number of extensive sidings constructed. It was not particularly attractive work, but the Bays had a lively and interesting experience on a rather foggy morning in January. A detachment working on the line heard the drone of an approaching German aeroplane, and presently saw it flying low about 500 yards away from the railway. There were some anxious moments of expectation that the next thing would be a bomb dropping or a burst of machine-gun fire. But they saw the aeroplane landing in a field close by, not far from a road. The pilot remained with his plane, but another airman, obviously the observer (who had failed to observe the working-party so near at hand), got out and walked quietly to inspect a sign-post of the road. It seemed the Germans had lost their bearings in the fog.

The Bays had no rifles, but a party armed only with their picks dashed out into the field, eager for a capture. The observer, a fat little man, began to run back to his aeroplane.

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The pilot taxied it along the ground, opening fire with his machine-gun, but luckily the shots went high and wide. The observer overtook the plane, caught hold of its fuselage and tried to climb in. Just then the pilot accelerated, probably imagining his comrade was safe on board. But the little man had fallen off, and in a moment was a prisoner of the Bays, while the aeroplane rose and disappeared in the fog. 'The observer was very exhausted after his attempt to escape, but was not a bad little chap,' writes Captain Kingstone.

In the absence of the large working-party on the railway, the men left in billets had a good deal of extra work to do, each of them having to take care of three or four horses. This and the winter weather made it difficult to carry out much training, but several of the officers and N.C.O.'s attended courses in bombing, field engineering, veterinary work, etc.

On January 25, Major Pinching and Captain Kingstone handed over the command of the Pioneer Battalion and the Bays Company to Lieut.-Colonel Anderson, D.S.O. (11th Hussars), and Lieutenant Grant (Queen's Bays). On February 20, Lieutenant R. T. Barnard relieved Lieutenant Grant in command of the Company, and on February 25, Captain N. St. C. Allfrey took command of the Battalion. This temporary formation was broken up on March 13, and the Bays detachment rejoined the Regiment at Montcavrel.

In the last week of January, Captain H. W. Hall, M.C., had left the Regiment to take the post of G.S.O.3 on the Staff of the 2nd Cavalry Division. In February, Major Pinching was awarded the French Croix de Guerre, and Sergeant Parker the Médaille Militaire. On the 17th, Major Pinching went to Jolmas to receive his decoration personally from the hands of General Nivelle. On March 20,

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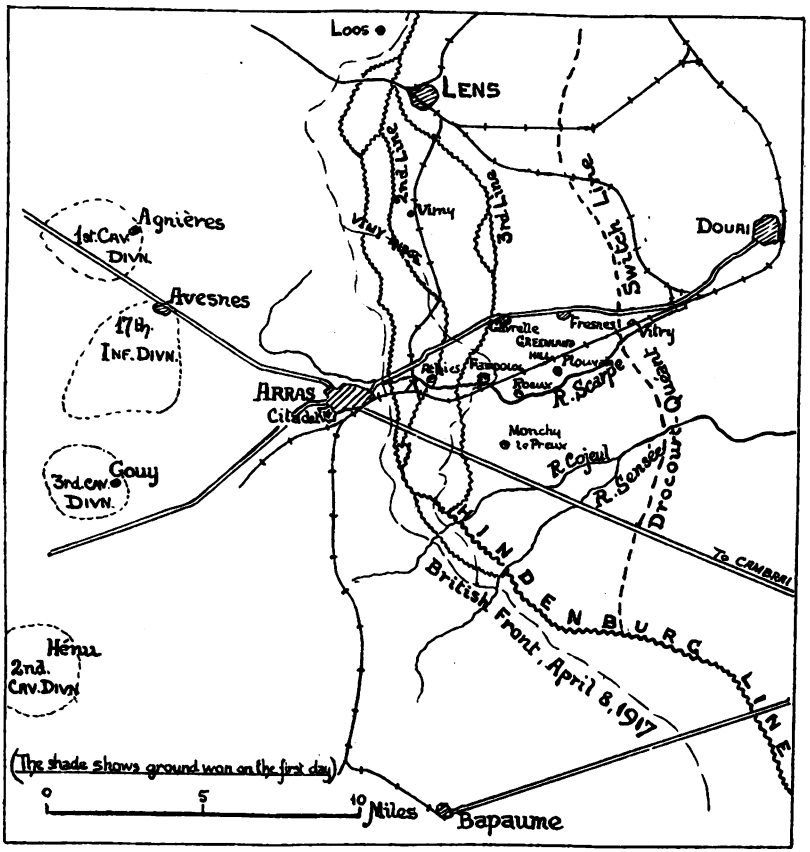

Ch. XXI. (26)

Battle of Arras, 1917.

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Major Ing, D.S.O., took temporary command of the North Somerset Yeomanry.

During the second half of the month of March, the Regiment was busy with its final preparations for the move to the Arras front. This began on April 5. It was a three days' march – to Créqui on the first day, Ostreville on the second, and to Agnières, about 8 miles north-west of Arras, on April 7, where they arrived in a snowstorm. Rain and snow had alternated during the march from Montcavrel. Bad weather always seemed to come with the promise of a 'gap,' and for this the 1st Cavalry Division was now concentrated in the neighbourhood of Agnières.

A few miles away to the southward the rest of the cavalry were concentrated, right and left of the Doullens-Arras road, the 2nd Cavalry Division, with Headquarters at Hénu; and the 3rd, with Headquarters at Gouy. Avesnes, near Agnières, was the Headquarters of the 17th Infantry Division, detailed to support the advance of the cavalry through the expected 'gap.' This Division was assembled south of the Arras-Thérouanne road.

Three lines of enemy trenches faced our Arras front, with a total depth of about as many miles. There were sanguine hopes that this barrier would be breached rapidly when our attack was launched on the coming Easter Monday, April 9. If this hope was realised, the cavalry was to be sent forward through the gap, towards Cambrai and Douai. The final objective of the first dash was to be a line of villages running south to north from the rear of the Hindenburg line and facing the new Drocourt-Quéant Switch line – a branch thrown off northwards from the Hindenburg front to cover Cambrai and Douai. This new line of works was reported to be under construction, but nearly complete. There was an intermediate objective along the line of the Sensée River and northwards across the

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Scarpe. In its first forward 'bound,' the cavalry were to occupy this line and secure the crossings of the two rivers. The supporting infantry division was to follow closely and take over this line when the cavalry pushed on to its final objective.

The battle of Arras, preceded by five days of intense bombardment, began at 5.30 a.m. on the 9th, when the British attack surged forward in a driving storm of sleet and snow on a front of 12 miles, from the Vimy Ridge southward to the ground between the Sensée and Cojeul, facing the extreme right of the new Hindenburg line. It was a day victory. In little more than half an hour all the enemy's front line was won. On the left the first rush of Canadians and Highlanders reached the crest-line of the Vimy Ridge. Then in the centre some 6 miles of the second line were captured, and later a wedge was driven through the third and last line in the Scarpe valley about Fampoux village. Thousands of German prisoners were sent back.[1]

Success was coming so quickly that there seemed to be good reason to count on a broad gap in the German third line before the day was over. All the cavalry received orders to be ready to move at an hour's notice. In the afternoon the 3rd Cavalry Division was sent forward through Arras, and the 17th Division, the infantry support, was ordered to move up through the city at 4.45 p.m.

The Bays, with the 1st Cavalry Division, were kept in readiness all day, but received no orders to move. There was only the beginning of a gap as yet, and the breach in the enemy line towards Fampoux, on the north bank of the Scarpe, was a mere bottle-neck. But there were hopes that it was the point of a wedge that would presently be

[1]Of this day Ludendorff wrote in his *Memoirs*: 'The battle near Arras on April 9 was a bad beginning for the main fighting of this year. . . . It upset all calculations. It was a matter of days before a new front could be formed and consolidated.'

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driven farther home and result in a wide opening in the enemy front.

But the Germans, recovering from the first shock of our attack, were making a dogged stand. They were hurrying up reinforcements, massing machine-gun detachments, digging and stringing out wire to improvise a new line in front of the nascent gap and bring a tremendous shell-fire to bear on the approaches to it.

In the evening some detachments of the 3rd Cavalry Division came into action to help our infantry, near the point of the wedge. But there was no break-through. The supporting infantry division found its advance beyond Arras blocked by reinforcements and supply-trains moving up to the front, and convoys of wounded streaming back. The order came that the Division was to spend the night in Arras and its eastern suburb.

On the 10th the Bays were still waiting for orders. Ground was gained that day south of the Scarpe, where a considerable stretch of the third enemy line, between that river and the Cojeul, was captured. But already a new German line was being formed between the two rivers, north and south of Monchy-le-Preux, which, on its bold rising ground, dominated the position. An attempt to push forward on both sides of the place failed. North of the Scarpe the infantry were attacking a new German line in front of Greenland Hill and about 500 yards east of Fampoux.

In the afternoon of the 11th, the 1st Cavalry Brigade was ordered to move up to Fampoux to support this attack. They marched to the front through the northern suburbs of Arras, and past the railway triangle by Athies to near Fampoux. Bad weather and heavy traffic had reduced the roads to an appalling condition, and for miles they were congested with troops and vehicles in movement to and

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from the front. The Brigade did not reach Fampoux till dusk, and was soon ordered to fall back for about a mile to near Athies, where the Bays bivouacked in the open.

'This and the succeeding night,' writes one of the officers, 'were the worst that we ever spent during the war. There was a foot of snow on the ground, and we had no cover or shelter of any description, and no blankets, etc., other than those carried on our horses. However, we chanced being bombed or anything of that kind, and lit several large fires, around which the men sat for the night.'

There was a hard frost, and next morning it was still freezing, but with a clear sky and bright sunshine. Shortly after 8 p.m. the Bays were warned that the attack north of the Scarpe would not be made till noon. But south of the river there was serious fighting in progress. Our infantry were attacking the German positions right and left of Monchy, and the 2nd Cavalry Division had been brought up to support them and exploit any break on this side. Monchy was heavily shelled. As it was thought to be only lightly held in consequence of this preparatory bombardment, the daring course was taken of sending the 6th Cavalry Brigade to make a mounted dash for the village. It was thus temporarily occupied, with hardly a show of resistance, though there were many casualties in the charge of the cavalry uphill and into the ruined village. But it was not held long. At once such a deluge of shell-fire came down upon it that it had to be abandoned. (It was taken later in the day by a converging and outflanking infantry attack.) From their bivouacs near Athies the Bays had a clear view of this cavalry dash for Monchy. The narrative of one of their squadron commanders[1] gives interesting impressions

[1]Captain J. J. Kingstone, then holding the rank of Lieutenant, and acting as a squadron commander.

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of the charge and retirement of the cavalry, and of the subsequent experiences of his own regiment.

'South of the river,' he writes, 'there was considerable activity on the high ground across which the Arras-Cambrai road runs, and we had a good view of this stretch of country from our position. Towards ten o'clock we saw the whole of the Cavalry Division advancing in close formation across country towards Monchy-le-Preux. It appeared as if the leading brigade, or at any rate regiment, reached that village, but the remainder were still moving forward when they came under tremendous shell-fire. This was one of the most thrilling sights I have ever seen. It looked as if they were suffering heavy casualties. We saw two of the brigades halt and wheel round, and then begin to retire slowly the way they had come, still under very heavy shell-fire. There was evidently a good deal of confusion going on, and with field-glasses it was possible to see the squadron commanders trying to control their men in the retirement. Every now and then one would see a shell burst in the middle of a squadron, and when the troops had moved on you saw a little clump of men and horses left behind in the snow. However, they eventually withdrew out of the firing, without being apparently very disorganised. No sooner had this taken place than I was sent for by the Colonel and told that we were going to do a similar kind of thing on a smaller scale. This was not very cheering news, having seen such a lamentable failure from what one might call the front row of the stalls.'

East of Fampoux the Germans had dug themselves in on a line running from near Gavrelle southward across the gently rising ground in front of Greenland Hill, then along the Douai-Arras railway, and again southwards to the chemical works and village of Roeux, on the north bank of the Scarpe, which here runs through a belt of swamps

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and pools. It was believed that behind this position there was open country with no continuous trench-line until the Drocourt-Quéant switch was reached.

The preparatory bombardment of the position had been in progress since dawn. At midday the Infantry Division were to attack it with, for their objective, the line Greenland Hill–Plouvain under cover of a barrage by all the available field artillery. The Bays were to go forward through Fampoux and seize Greenland Hill. This done, they were to push north-eastward towards the Vitry–Lens railway, sending patrols to Gavrelle, Fresnes and Vitry. The Regiment was to act as a vanguard for the 1st Cavalry Brigade.

The order of the advance of the Bays was: C Squadron (Lieutenant J. J. Kingstone) leading, followed by A (Lieutenant Barnard) and B (Captain Single). Kingstone notes in his narrative of the day: 'I was told that the advance was to be attempted irrespective of whether we heard if the infantry attack was successful, and that we were to follow, mounted, immediately in rear of the barrage.'

He goes on to tell how: 'At 12 noon, we were in position behind two batteries of artillery. I went up to see the commander of one of these, who told me that his orders were to commence the barrage at 12.25, so we waited just in rear of the guns. Whilst we were waiting we saw one of our aeroplanes being chased by ten or twelve German machines quite low down. They got the unfortunate fellow, and then proceeded to machine-gun the artillery, but luckily did not pay any attention to us.'

At 12.25 the artillery began the barrage fire, and immediately the enemy put down a counter-barrage on the front and along the Athies-Fampoux road, on which the Bays were now going forward in column of troops, with 200 yards' interval between each. Happily at this stage the casualties

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LIEUT. QUESTED'S PATROL ATTEMPTING TO REACH GREENLAND HILL, FAMPOUX
BATTLE OF ARRAS, APRIL 11, 1917
From the painting by Lionel Edwards, now in possession of the Regiment

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were very few, as the shells mostly fell right and left of the road. In Fampoux the German barrage-fire was very heavy. A continuous shell shower was coming down on and around the cross-roads in the village. When the leading troop (No. 3) reached the eastern exit of the village, the German fire was increasing, and there was no sign that the infantry attack had ever begun. Lieutenant Grant, Second-in-Command of the squadron, and the trumpeter, were wounded. Kingstone decided that there must be at least a temporary halt, told the squadron to take what cover they could in the village, and sent out Second-Lieutenant Quested with 6 men with orders to gallop forward along the road to Fampoux station and find out what, 'if anything,' was happening.

A hundred yards from the village the patrol came under a hot shell- and machine-gun fire, and all seven were dismounted, with their horses killed or badly wounded. One of the men went a little farther forward and came upon the infantry still waiting in the position they had occupied all the morning. He got back to Fampoux and reported this. Quested and the other five lay out under cover all day, but at dusk in a driving snowstorm made their way back to the Regiment.

Kingstone was soon able to verify the report that there was no infantry attack. Near Fampoux he found the Battalion Headquarters of a regiment of the 4th Division. He had a talk with their Colonel, who told him that owing to continuous enfilade machine-gun and artillery-fire from the opposite side of the river, they had not been able to advance at all. He added that 'his men, who had taken part in the battle the day before, had suffered heavy casualties, and he did not think there was any practical chance of getting on under existing circumstances.'

Soon after Kingstone got back to the village, the Com-

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manding Officer, Lieut.-Colonel Lawson, came into it, and after receiving his report, at once decided that it would be quite useless to attempt an advance. As Fampoux was obviously the target for an intense enemy bombardment, and there was now no object in remaining there any longer, he ordered that the men should be withdrawn to the west side of it.

Kingstone's narrative thus describes the withdrawal: 'I went to collect the squadron, and found the two troops in rear had been able to get into a big sandpit, and so had escaped much of the shell-fire. No. 3 troop, the leading one, had suffered very heavily, particularly from a direct hit from a large shell, which had brought a wall down on top of them. It took a considerable time to extricate such men as were alive from the debris. The result was that they had lost 17 men killed and wounded, including Sergeant Chelmsford, their troop-sergeant, and Corporal Smith. The latter was our best footballer in pre-war days, and as the result of his wounds he lost both legs and one eye.'

Soon after 4 p.m. the shelling began gradually to die down, and at 5.30 the Regiment was withdrawn to its bivouac near Athies, where another miserable night was spent in the snow.

By that evening all idea of a great cavalry break-through had been abandoned by General Headquarters. The 17th Infantry Division, which was to have supported the advance of the mounted troops through the 'gap,' received orders to the effect that it was now detached from the Cavalry Corps, and transferred to the 6th Corps. The great cavalry concentration was to be broken up. All the cavalry were to withdraw west of Arras. On the 12th the Bays with the 1st Cavalry Division went back to their billets about Agnières.

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The losses of the Regiment had been:

	Killed.	Wounded.	Totals.
Officers	–	5	5
Other ranks	4	18	22
Totals	4	23	27

Of the horses, 14 were killed, 6 wounded and 3 died of exposure.

On the 16th the Regiment made a 35 miles westward march to billets at St. Georges near Hesdin.

The battle of Arras went on till far into the month of May, with some useful gains of ground, but none equal to those of the first victorious attack. The British had, in the first week of the fighting, done their full share in Nivelle's ambitious plan, by drawing a considerable mass of the German reserves to the Arras front. The French operations, to which ours were a prelude, began on April 16, and after a first success ended in a costly failure, which had very unfortunate consequences. On the 16th, on a front of many miles, the German first line in Champagne was stormed, but thanks to the capture of a prisoner at an earlier date, who had detailed orders for the advance in his possession, the German headquarters knew precisely what was coming and were well prepared for it. The second line had been strengthened, and all heavy artillery withdrawn well to its rear, to positions from which, out of reach of the French gunners, it could deal with the assault on what was now the real line of defence. Against this the French attack broke down, with terrible losses. Nivelle was deprived of his command, and there followed a crisis for the French army, of which the secret was – wonderful to say – kept till the end of the war both from the enemy and from the public knowledge of the allied nations.

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For several weeks in the summer of 1917, the main French army in Champagne was paralysed by widespread mutiny and disaffection. There were no outbreaks of violence, but in whole regiments the men refused to obey orders and talked of taking steps to end the war. There is no need to discuss here the details of this anxious period for our Allies. The mutiny had some peculiar features. The outpost service was kept up, and the men declared their determination to obey orders if there was question of repelling a German attack. But they would not hear of any further costly assaults like that of April, which they denounced as mere useless slaughter. The news of the Russian Revolution no doubt influenced the movement, and the small Russian contingent with the army was a centre of disaffection. Soldiers and workmen's councils were organised on the Soviet model, and there was wild talk of a march on Paris to compel peace negotiations. General Pétain was put in command, and with a minimum of severity and a maximum of friendly consideration for real grievances of the rank and file, he at last restored discipline.

Meanwhile it was essential to keep the enemy occupied and divert his attention from the French front. So Haig's original plan for an offensive in Flanders was put into operation, and through the summer and the early autumn the British armies played the chief part and bore the brunt of the war on the Western Front.

It was not till the late autumn that the Bays were again engaged in active operations. At St. Georges, near Hesdin, where they stayed a month – from April 16 to May 14 – they had a well-earned rest. When the Regiment arrived there, the horses were in wretched condition. They had been exposed to severe cold, snow and wet, often without proper ration of food, and for two days with very little

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water. But during the stay at St. Georges, where they had comfortable stables and an extra ration of oats and hay, they soon improved, and when the Bays left these quarters their mounts were all in first-rate condition.

During this stay at St. Georges, news came of the death of Major Pinching, M.C., in a nursing-home in London, after an operation. All ranks felt his loss, for he was one of the most popular and ablest officers in the Regiment, in which all his life as a soldier had been spent. His death was entirely due to the after results of the wound received in the battle of the Somme, and to his having refused to report himself as ill, and remaining on duty when, after his return to the Regiment, his health was breaking down.

On May 14, the Bays marched from St. Georges *viâ* Anvin in the upper Sernoise valley to Marles-les-Mines, near Bruay, in the colliery region west of Lens. Here the Bays were in billets till June 4, when they went to Le Sart till the 10th, and thence to Nedon and Nedonchelle.

Two dismounted parties, a small one under Captain N. St. C. Allfrey and a larger one under Lieutenant F. Milnes, M.C., were sent to a camp at Ecurie for digging operations near the captured Vimy Ridge. All work was done at night, and entailed long marches from and back to the camp. On June 28, Major R. N. Stewart Richardson (11th Hussars) was attached to the Regiment as Second-in-Command. On the same day the Bays moved to new billets at Busnettes. While there, a number of officers and other ranks were sent to the 1st Cavalry Division Hotchkiss Gun School, at Camiers on the coast, where, throughout the courses, Captain J. J. Kingstone, M.C., commanded the 1st Cavalry Brigade party.

The Lewis-gun, issued in large numbers to the infantry, had been found unsuitable for cavalry work, and the Hotchkiss, long used as a machine-gun for the

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French cavalry units, was being issued to our mounted troops.

On July 9 the detached working-parties rejoined the Regiment, and on the 12th there was a move from Busnettes back to Le Sart, where the Bays remained till the 29th.

By this time Flanders had once more become the chief scene of the British operations, and the plans originally prepared for the beginning of the year were being carried into effect. When the fighting in front of Arras died down in May, a transfer of British forces on a large scale began from the front between the Lys and the Somme to the Ypres–Yser front. Of the five British armies on the Western Front, the First and Third only were left to hold the line between the Somme and the Lys, while the Fourth and Fifth were moved northward to act with the Second Army in the great push in Flanders.

On June 7, Plumer, with the Second Army, won a brilliant success by retaking the Wytschaete-Messines Ridge, south of Ypres, which the enemy had held since the end of November 1914. This was the prelude to the subsequent operations. These were intended to drive the enemy from the heights commanding the Ypres salient, gain the ground along and on both sides of the Passchendaele Ridge towards Roulers and Bruges, clear the coast region of the enemy, capture Ostend and his submarine bases there and at Zeebrugge, and turn the German line on its seaward flank.

During the month of July most of the officers went in small parties from Busnettes and Le Sart to pay a brief visit to the Ypres salient. They were attached to the 2nd Infantry Corps, and made visits to the front to renew their acquaintance with the ground, and get a general idea of the actual situation and the lines on which the new offensive was developing, and some indication as to the plan on

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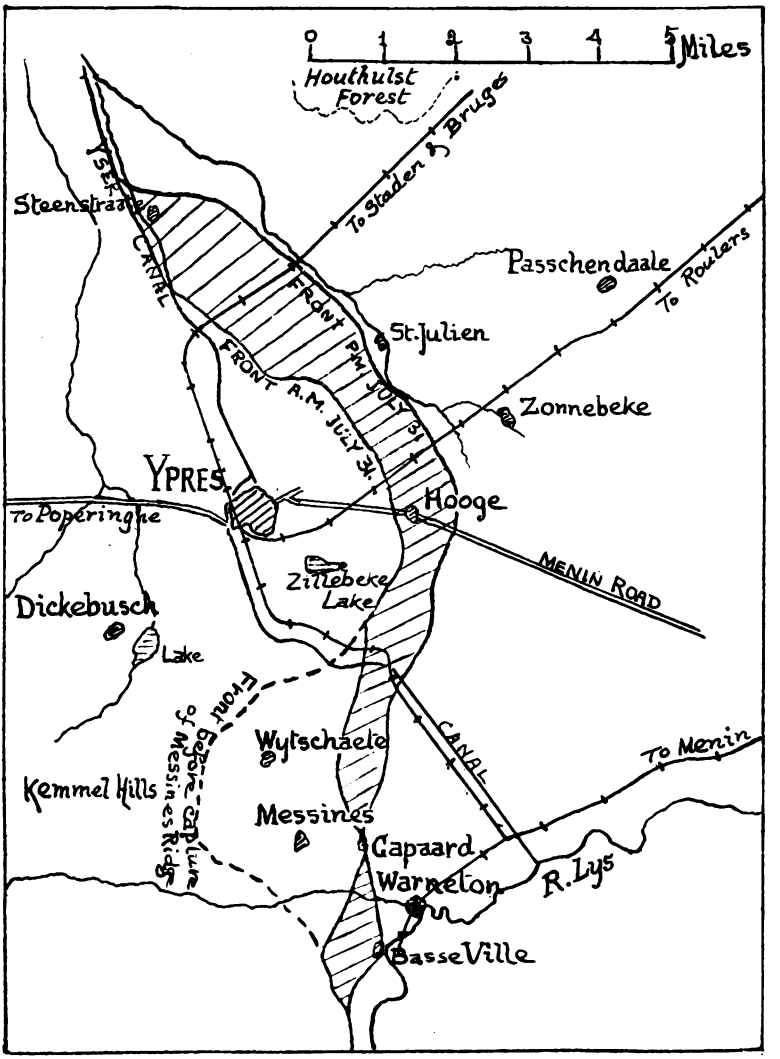

Ypres, 1917.—Sketch showing extent of ground gained on July 31.

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which the cavalry would act, if the expected success was obtained. There was, in fact, one more expectation of a 'gap.'

Towards the end of July the 1st Cavalry Brigade was concentrated. On the 29th the Bays moved up with it to the neighbourhood of Houtkerque, west of Poperinghe, and on the 31st to Dickebusch, 3 miles south-west of Ypres on the Bailleul road. As the Bays moved up to Houtkerque, they had heard away to the right the thunder of a tremendous cannonade; it was the preparatory bombardment of the enemy front from the Lys to a distance of some miles north of the Ypres salient. At Dickebusch on the 31st, they heard close at hand the roar of a great battle.

For that was the critical day in the Flanders operations of 1917 – the beginning of the 'great push' which was meant to carry our front forward to Bruges and the Belgian bank of the Scheldt, wiping out the German coast fortress and its submarine nests, and turning the northern flank of the German lines.

The attack of July 31 was made on a front of nearly 15 miles from the Lys to Steenstraate on the Yser line. On the left, Anthoine's French army was in action.

Then the Guards and three other army corps and Gough's Fifth Army prolonged the line to the Ypres–Commines Canal, and two corps of Plumer's Second Army attacked between the canal crossing and the Lys. The attack that day was brilliantly successful. In the centre the Hooge height was won, and right and left of it the line was carried forward, the left advance winning its way for a depth of 2 miles. It was a promising opening of the great turning movement.

But once more a first success was followed by disappointment and delay. There had been dull, cloudy weather in the last week of July. On the 30th there had been a violent

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thunderstorm and rain in the afternoon, followed by drizzling showers during the night. The day of battle had begun with misty weather under cloudy skies, and in the afternoon the rain began again, and became a steady downpour during the night.

The men on the battlefield had a wretched time that night, huddled together in flooded trenches and shell-holes, with reliefs and supplies arriving late over the sodden ground, that was rapidly becoming a morass. At dawn it was realised that further operations were for the time being impossible, and the deluge went on for several days and nights. In his dispatch, Sir Douglas Haig well described the conditions that for a while brought our advance to a standstill: 'The low-lying, clayey soil, torn by shells and sodden by rain, turned to a succession of vast muddy pools. The valleys of the choked and overflowing streams were speedily transformed into long stretches of bog, impassable, except by a few well-defined tracks, which became marks for the enemy's artillery. To leave these tracks was to risk death by drowning, and in the course of the subsequent fighting, on several occasions both men and pack animals were lost in this way.'

With these adverse conditions developing, it was realised that there was not likely to be any scope for the intervention of the cavalry, and on August 2 the concentration of mounted troops in the Ypres area began to be broken up. That morning, still under a downpour of rain, the Bays set off on a depressing march of 45 miles southwards to billets at Nuncq-Nieurlet, on high ground above the Canche valley south of St. Pol and west of Hesdin, where they remained for a fortnight.

A few days after their arrival at Nuncq, there came an order for a dismounted party of an officer and 50 men to return to the Ypres region, for work in rear of the line at

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Eleverdinghe. Once more the cavalry – disappointed of any chance of the special duties for which they were trained – were engaged in tasks that might have been as well performed by a non-combatant labour corps. It was the fortune of war; but it was something like using costly high-grade tools to break up firewood.

On August 18 the Regiment moved westward to billets about Hesdigneul, in pleasant country some 3 miles from Boulogne. There was some training during this stay in the coast region. There were drills on the sands at Hardilot, where also there were facilities for bathing. Boulogne gave opportunities for amusement, and despite changeable weather, sports were organised. Of these the most memorable event was a Rugby football match between the officers of the Bays and those of the First Army School, which resulted in a glorious victory for the former.

There was a brief interruption in this comparatively restful time in the first days of October. In August and September the operations on the Ypres front had dragged on with alternate pauses and minor gains, when there was a brief lull in the bad weather. It was a conflict in a vast swamp – some of the muddiest fighting in all the annals of warfare. At the end of September some gains on the left raised a passing hope of getting forward to firmer ground, and in the first week of October there was a sudden call for the Bays to move up to near the fighting front.

The first day's march was, on October 6, by the Canche valley to Nuncq-Nieurlet, and then came a long move to Herzeele, a few miles west of Poperinghe. October 9 was the day of a renewed deluge of cold and heavy rain, an advance under terrible difficulties and with very limited gains. On the 11th the Regiment marched back to Nuncq-Nieurlet, and reached its former billets at Hesdigneul on the 12th.

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One of the officers, who was on leave in London just then, brought back a rumour that at last the cavalry were to have their opportunity. All the five Cavalry Divisions then in France, including the Indian mounted troops, would be concentrated for an enterprise somewhere in France, the hope of their being used in Flanders having been finally abandoned. Not much value was attached to the report, but it soon proved to be well founded. It was a curious instance of the way in which people in London in certain circles sometimes knew more of what was going on, or about to happen at the front, than most of those who were on the spot. 'Confidential' gossip by imprudent individuals, anxious to show they were in touch with the authorities, was the source of these reports, and no doubt at times the leakage was useful to the enemy. In this case, however, the secret was kept from the German Intelligence organisation.

On November 11, the Bays began a series of five night marches for 'an unknown destination.' The general direction was eastward, and it was soon realised that it was towards the battle fronts of Artois.

The first moves were:

November 11,	to Torcy and Créquy .	26 miles
,, 12,	to Outrebois . .	29 ,,
,, 13,	to Beaumont . .	18 ,,
,, 14,	to Cappy . . .	17 ,,
,, 15,	to Buire . . .	16 ,,

These marches were made in cold and often wet weather. At Buire, where there was a halt until the 20th, only one squadron had shelter for its horses, but the men were in huts. The 1st Cavalry Division was in billets in the neighbourhood. It was the concentration for the battle of Cambrai.

This battle of Cambrai was a notable event, for it had

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features that marked it as a new departure in tactical methods and thus a most interesting experiment.

The fighting in Flanders was drawing to an end. Instead of the wide sweeping movement that had been planned, the advance after three months had come to a dead stop on the line that was to have been reached in the first fortnight. The gains since the bad weather began in the first day of August were the clearing of the heights round the Ypres salient and a wedge driven into the enemy's ground north-eastward as far only as a line from Passchendaele across the swampy lands to Houthulst Forest. The advance had been clogged and drowned in mud, in which the wrecks of more than two hundred tanks had been abandoned. There was some risk of the new weapon being discredited once and for all. But it was to have a fairer trial at Cambrai.

It had been, so far, a disappointing year. America had come in, but her armies would not be in line in France for months to come. Russia had utterly collapsed, and the new Soviet Government was arranging a peace with the enemy. The Italians had suffered a vast defeat, and French and British troops were being withdrawn from France to help them. After the failure of the great French offensive in the spring, followed by only limited and costly gains in Flanders, a success of some kind on the Western Front was badly needed.

The secret of the plans for securing this desirable success was marvellously kept, and when the blow was struck it came as a complete surprise to the enemy. The German front before Cambrai was chosen as the objective of this new offensive. It had been a 'quiet sector' during the summer, and it was known that it was not very strongly held, as troops had been drawn from it to reinforce the enemy against our push in Flanders.

The attack was to be made by Sir Julian Byng's Third

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Army, which had not been seriously engaged since the fighting about Arras in the spring. The advance was to be between the Canal du Nord and the St. Quentin–Scheldt Canal line. Across these two canals ran the Hindenburg line covering Cambrai – a formidable barrier on which the Germans had now been working for more than a year. It was a double line of front and support trenches, with wide ditches and broad belts of heavy wire entanglements.

If the precedent of former offensives had been followed, it would have been bombarded for about a fortnight before the attack day, and thus full warning of the coming blow given to its defenders. A considerable amount of heavy artillery had been collected on the British front, but before the attack there was only the occasional desultory shelling that went on all the year round. The big guns were to come into action with a barrage at zero hour of the attack. The guns newly mounted did not even risk revealing their position by 'registering' or trial shots.

The ground was hard and dry, and the way for the advance through and over the Hindenburg line was to be cleared, not by shell-fire, but by some hundreds of tanks, trampling and ploughing their way over the wire, the ditches and the entrenchments. The infantry force to follow them was on a more moderate scale than on earlier occasions. Six divisions were in the front line, with a single division in close reserve. Four divisions of cavalry (1st, 2nd, 3rd and 5th) were held in readiness to push through as soon as the barrier was forced and breached by tanks and infantry. The enemy was believed to have only three divisions actually covering Arras, and in his plans Haig estimated that the Germans would not be able to reinforce the sector heavily within forty-eight hours.

The plan of the battle was a novel one. Protected by a tremendous barrage-fire, the tanks, closely followed by the

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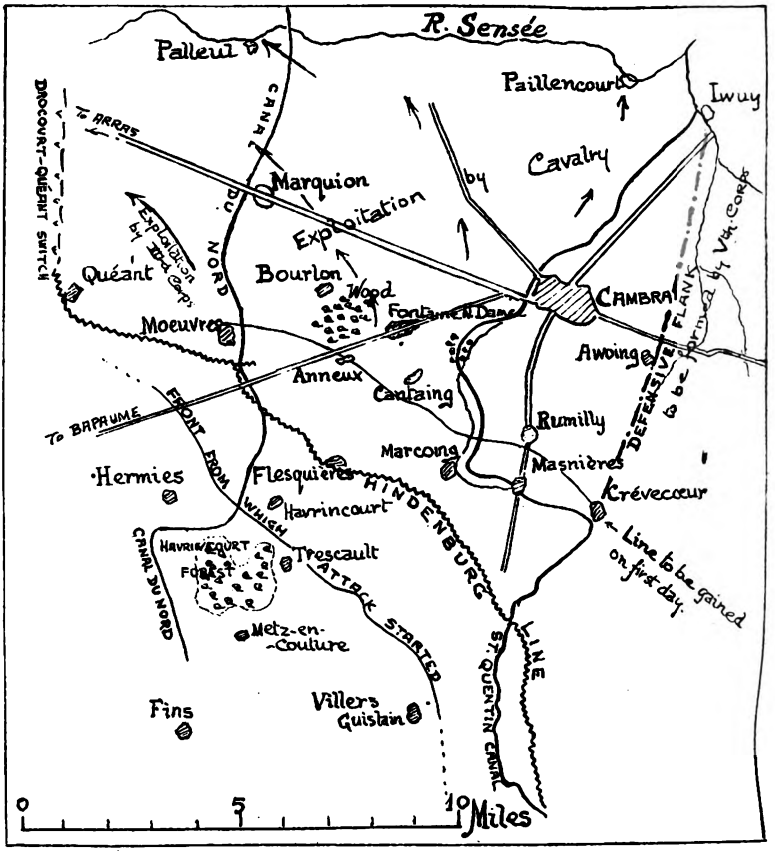

Ch. XXI. (28) —CAMBRAI – Nov. 20. 1917. – (Plan of Attack).—

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infantry, were to break through the German defences on a front of just over 5 miles, and reached the line Crévecoeur-Moeuvres. The cavalry would then go forward – the 1st Cavalry Division on the left of the Scheldt Canal, the 2nd and 5th Cavalry Divisions on the right. They were to push out northward and north-eastward, and seize the crossings of the Sensée River and the Scheldt Canal, and cut the German communications in rear of the enemy's forces holding the Quéant-Drocourt switch-line facing Arras.

On the right the infantry of the 3rd Corps was to follow the cavalry advance east of Cambrai, and form a defensive flank about 10 miles long from Crévecoeur to Iwuy.

These were to be the operations of the first day, November 20. On the 21st the divisions of the 5th Corps on the left (Guards, 40th and 59th) were to push northwards and north-westwards, leaving the cavalry advance and Cambrai on their right, reach the Sensée River and push advanced guards forward to the high ground between it and the Scarpe. There were reported to be no serious or continuous entrenched positions in rear of the Hindenburg line. Cambrai, an open town, was not to be attacked, but isolated by the advance on both sides of it. Further developments would depend on the success obtained.

Having thus described the general situation and outlined the plan of the coming battle, we return to our record of the experiences of the Bays. As we have already noted, they had reached Buire, a few miles east of Péronne in the early hours of November 16, after five night marches, in which they had covered a distance of 106 miles. The later stages of it had been through the country devastated by the enemy in his retirement to the Hindenburg line. At Buire there was very little shelter for men or horses. The former were crowded in some roughly improvised huts; as for the horses,

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those of one squadron were stabled in a shed, the rest being picketed in the open.

Four days were spent here, and at 1 a.m. on November 20 there was a start on a night march of about 9 miles northward to the concentration area of the 1st Cavalry Division, north-west of Fins.

Here the Regiment was about 3 miles in rear of the British front, and not far from Havrincourt Forest – an extensive woodland which had been used as a hiding-place for whole swarms of tanks. At 6.20 a.m., as dawn came, the roar of the barrage told that the attack had begun. The Regiment was now held in readiness to advance, but as the morning wore on and no orders came, many began to fear that once more there was to be a disappointment as to the promised 'gap.' At 11 a.m. there came an order to move forward, but it was only to a hollow on the eastern margin of the forest, about half-way between Trescault and Metz-en-Couture.

Here the Regiment waited during the rest of the day and bivouacked for the night. That evening one of the officers asked the Colonel what hopes there were for the Bays of doing anything next day. He replied that he did not know what anybody else intended to do, but he had every intention of 'doing something.'

The attack on the first day of the battle had given rapid and important gains, though they fell short of what was anticipated. But it was a solid success and notable as the first really satisfactory action of the tanks, even though here, too, there were some local checks to their advance. The annexed sketch shows approximately the new front won on the 20th. The first rush of tanks and infantry had broken through, and over some 5 miles of the Hindenburg line. Only at two points had there been any checks to their onset. On the ridge near Flesquières these were held for a while

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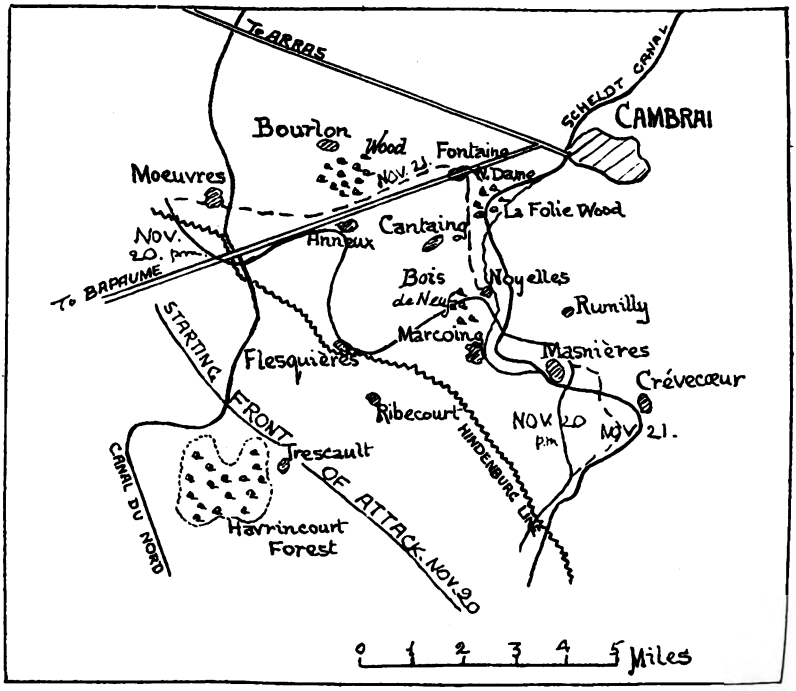

Ch. XXI. 29 —Battle of Cambrai—ground gained, Nov. 20 & 21.—

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by gun-fire, five being knocked out in succession by a single gun served by an enemy gunner officer. On the right, at Masnières, the check was more serious, the leading tank going through and wrecking the bridge over the canal, and blocking all the advance here for a while.

Beyond the Hindenburg front the enemy's resistance stiffened. The Germans had recovered from the overwhelming surprise with which the battle opened. At some points the destined objective of the Moeuvres-Crévecoeur line was reached. But there was no 'gap,' and orders issued to the cavalry after the first rush were almost at once countermanded. But there had been substantial gains. The tanks had proved that they could clear the way over wire, ditch and breastwork; the infantry had got forward at more than one point farther than in any previous offensive; losses had not been heavy, and some 5000 prisoners had been sent back.

On the second day there were some further gains, mostly on the left. Detachments of cavalry were sent in to work with the tanks and infantry, and the Bays at last got the chance of 'doing something.'

Ay 9.45 a.m. they went forward, crossed the captured Hindenburg line just beyond Ribecourt, and halted in a clump of wood, the Bois de Neuf, north of Marcoing, to find out what the situation was, with a view to co-operating with our left advance. It was about 11 a.m. An infantry attack on Cantaing had been repulsed, and the village of Noyelles was partly held by the enemy.

What followed may best be described by following the narrative of the day, written by one of the squadron commanders, Captain Kingstone, noting some additional details from other sources. He begins his account of the day's work by describing the view northwards from the Bois de Neuf:

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'We had a view for a thousand yards[1] or so of open country leading up the ridge along which the main Cambrai-Bapaume road runs, and which to our immediate front was commanded by Bourlon Wood and the village of Fontaine-Nôtre-Dame. As far as we could see, there was no German trench line between us, except some wire round the village of Cantaing, half-way between where we were and the ridge. Whilst waiting in the wood the Colonel met a Tank Officer, who said he did not know what to do, but that he had four tanks in working order and wanted to use them. This was sufficient for the Colonel, and he decided to make good his words of the previous evening. He told the Tank Officer to advance on the village of Cantaing, and that he himself intended to follow immediately behind with the Regiment.

'His orders to us were that "A" Squadron was to advance at the gallop, enter the village behind the tanks and occupy the east and north-east extremities of it; that I was to follow with "C" Squadron and occupy the north and east edges; "B" Squadron being kept in reserve. Soon after 11 the tanks advanced, and when they were about to enter the village we left the Wood and galloped forward. We met with little or no opposition from the enemy infantry, but were greeted with a considerable amount of shell-fire coming from our immediate right flank as we got into the village.

'Remembering what happened at Fampoux we did not remain in the village, but pushed forward to the northern and eastern outskirts, leaving only a few men to clear up the village. The tanks, meanwhile, or rather three of them, had moved on as if making for Bourlon Wood, and in so doing had routed a large number of enemy infantry, who came streaming past in disorder across our front. We did a

[1]Clear air and the existence of the hollow in front of the ridge must have caused this to be underestimated. The distance was much greater.

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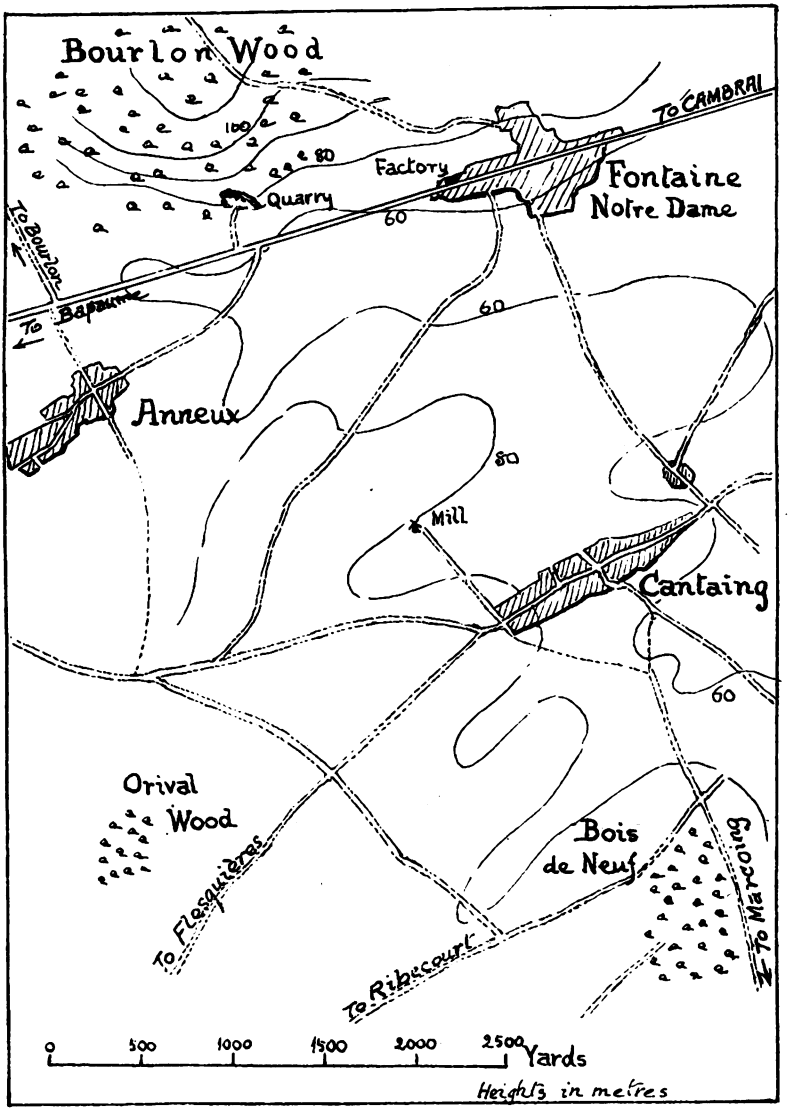

Ch XXI. (30) — Battle of Cambrai _ ground on which the Queen's Bays were in action. —

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lot of shooting at them, and I now think this was the moment when another regiment of the Cavalry Brigade should have been sent forward. However, on the one occasion when there seemed to be a really good opportunity for Cavalry action, the Headquarters of both Brigade and Division were miles back and out of touch with the situation. It took some time to round up the prisoners in the village itself, and we took over a hundred, most of them by "A" Squadron.'

A large number of the prisoners were rounded up by A Squadron (Captain Single) as they tried to get out of the village to escape the tanks, carrying a couple of machine-guns with them. As soon as the village was cleared, Captain Kingstone sent out a patrol from C Squadron to see what the position to the immediate front was, and then rode forward for some distance to the northward. He gives this account of the situation as he saw it:

'With Sergeant-Major Tatlow I rode up into Fontaine-Nôtre-Dame. One of the tanks, which had assisted us, had broken down near the village, another had been knocked out by shell-fire and the occupant had managed to escape. The third was burning, and we learned that the crew were burned inside it. There were small parties of British infantry in Fontaine village and on the outskirts of Bourlon Wood, but there was no sign whatsoever of the enemy. In addition to this a large number of civilians were coming out of Cambrai, and they all said what Germans were there – and they were only details – were in a state of great confusion. This information was immediately sent back, because it seemed that the road was wide open for advance, if only the rest of the Cavalry Brigade were brought up.

'However, nothing was done, and orders were issued to consolidate on the outskirts of Cantaing. We had had a number of casualties, and these were removed by the German prisoners in the evening, and the horses were also

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sent back to be watered and fed. The rest of the night was spent in making arrangements for holding the village and in improving the defences, and also in persuading such civilians as were still left in it to clear out of the way. We found a great deal of German equipment, stores, etc., in the village and quite a well-stocked canteen.'

The enemy was now being reinforced. During the day one of the divisions set free on the Eastern Front by the collapse of Russia arrived at Cambrai, and other divisions were being hurried up from various sectors of the enemy front in France. On the 23rd the ground won by our advance was being consolidated, and two divisions were brought up to relieve some of the troops holding our new line. On the left the enemy made a serious counter-attack, the force employed including the division that had just arrived from Eastern Europe. Kingstone's narrative tells what the Bays saw of this local engagement:

'In the morning things began to liven up, and the show commenced with a very heavy shell-fire on Cantaing village, which luckily did us no damage, as we were all in the outskirts, and also as the horses had been kept behind. Soon after this we saw a considerable activity on the high ground near Bourlon Wood, and were able to see large numbers of German troops moving apparently from Cambrai towards Fontaine-Nôtre-Dame. Very soon heavy rifle-fire broke out, and the troops who had been in the village the previous night were driven out. The Germans then began to debouch from the village in large numbers, but their progress was eventually stopped some four or five hundred yards from Cantaing by very heavy accurate fire from a Field Artillery Brigade somewhere to our left rear. We ourselves were unable to fire, owing to the fact that the Infantry were between us and the Germans, and it certainly looked at one time as if the very small numbers of our Infantry that were

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there would be driven back to the village. They put up a magnificent stand, and by nightfall, although much disorganised and having no very definite line of position, were comparatively safe.

'At about 7 in the evening, orders were received that certain battalions of the 51st Highland Division were to take over Cantaing from us, and after considerable difficulty we withdrew about midnight, the village itself being under continual shell-fire the whole time. Thus ended the first occasion since the beginning of the war when we had been able to justify our existence as mounted troops.'

There was a disappointed feeling that a chance of doing much more had been lost.

The enemy's counter-attack had recaptured not only Fontaine-Nôtre Dame, but also the position we held on the slopes of the wooded heights of Bourlon and all the ground north of the Cambrai-Bapaume road.

On the 23rd the Regiment moved back to Metz-en-Couture, south of Havrincourt Forest, where they remained until the 27th. During these days a dismounted detachment, under Captain Single, was kept at the front, as part of an improvised battalion formed under command of Major Rome (11th Hussars), to hold and improve a new trench line near the Cambrai-Bapaume road and facing Bourlon Wood. At this stage of the battle there was hard fighting for the possession of the Wood, and ground was lost and won alternately. On the remainder of the front some minor gains of ground secured a line fron near Fontaine-Nôtre-Dame south-westward towards Masnières, and from that point back to our old front near Villers Guislan. The new line thus formed a blunted salient with its north-east face about 3 miles from Cambrai. The idea of any further advance had been abandoned, and all efforts were now devoted to consolidating the position thus occupied.

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On the 27th, the detached party rejoined the Regiment at Metz-en-Couture, and the Bays moved back to Cappy on the Somme, 8 miles west of Péronne. The general impression was that the battle on the Cambrai front was over, and there would be no serious operations till the winter had passed. Some of the officers had actually been given leave for the first week of December.

But on November 30, early in the day, there came sudden emergency orders to march at once eastward towards the fighting front. The Bays marched that day by Péronne to Bussu, a couple of miles west of the old town. They bivouacked that night in the open, and there was the first touch of winter, a hard frost from nightfall till after dawn. Next morning they moved on to Villers Faucon (5 miles south-east of Fins), where they heard of what had happened on November 30 – known only by vague rumours the day before.

On the last day of November, the Germans, having succeeded in concentrating a large force by night close up to our new front, had made a surprise attack on the new salient, assisted by the cold fog of the wintry morning. They pushed in first on the south-east front and then on the north-east, winning a considerable amount of ground at the first rush, and capturing tanks – parked behind the line – guns and a large number of prisoners. At Villers Faucon the Bays heard that the Indian cavalry had just made a dismounted attack and suffered heavily, and there were rumours that the 1st Cavalry Brigade would be presently sent in to repeat the effort to win back some of the lost ground. The enemy had broken through where our new line joined our old front, and actually held Gouzeaucourt inside this original line.

But the Bays were kept in reserve all day, and it was not till evening that orders came for the 1st Cavalry Brigade

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SOME OFFICERS, 1915

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to send up dismounted working-parties to entrench an improvised front south-west of Gouzeaucourt. The Bays' party was under the command of Captain Kingstone, who thus relates their experiences:

'We were to rendezvous at Heudicourt level-crossing, where there was also a sugar factory, and here we were supposed to meet an officer of the Infantry Division concerned to show us where to dig. I thought at the time that this meeting-place was a most unsuitable one, as it was not more than a mile and a half from the German line, and as a rule railway stations, level-crossings and sugar factories are places to be avoided. However, nothing happened so far as the Germans were concerned. We roughly learned where our own front line was supposed to be, and the direction of the enemy. We now had to move across country to get to the place. It was pitch dark, and we continually came across both dead and wounded Indians, who had been left out from their counter-attack the previous morning. I did not really think there was any front line existing, but we managed to find some isolated parties of the Inniskilling Dragoons, and we decided that it would be best to try and dig a trench together.

'We dug all night until just before daylight, but as the trenches were sited in the dark, without it being possible to see the lie of the land in front, it was doubtful if they could have been of much practical value. The digging was hindered by the fact that there was a good deal of machine-gun and rifle-fire going on, and also we had to put out several picquets to safeguard our front while at work. Although we had only one or two casualties, it was not a very pleasant night, and the men were extremely tired when we eventually rejoined the horses between 6 and 7 next morning. It was surprising to see what confusion could be caused by an unexpected retirement, and I shall never

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forget the confusion that was going on at Heudicourt station that night.'

In the afternoon of December 2, it was ordered that the 1st Cavalry Division should supply a dismounted 'battalion' from each Brigade to go into the trenches that night. On the 3rd the remainder of the Bays went back with the horses to their former billets at Cappy on the Somme.

The dismounted force was commanded by Brigadier-General E. Makins, C.B., D.S.O., and the 1st Brigade Battalion was commanded by Lieut.-Colonel R. P. Anderson, D.S.O. (11th Hussars); the Bays Company of 5 officers and 196 other ranks was under Captain R. T. Barnard; and this Company, with the 11th Hussars Company, was placed in the front line, with the 5th Dragoon Guards Company in support. Next day, the 5th Dragoon Guards relieved the Bays in the front line, and on the 4th the whole Brigade was relieved by the 2nd Cavalry Division, and went back to the neighbourhood of Langavesnes. Here they remained until December 15, sending working-parties, on two nights out of every three, to dig reserve trenches on the Heudicourt-Govencourt-Saulcourt line. On December 16 the dismounted party rejoined the Regiment.

On that day the Bays moved to Buire, east of Péronne, and occupied the same huts they had been in before the battle of Cambrai. Few huts were at first available, but later a large hut was put up for each squadron as sleeping quarters for the men, and two Nyssen huts were provided, one for the Officers Mess, the other for the sergeants. The Bays were informed that these were likely to be their permanent billets for the winter, and that they would probably take their turn in holding the trenches, a sector of which had been handed over to the Cavalry Corps.

German aircraft were now very active, and as men and

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horses were billeted in concentrated areas not far from the front, there were warnings that caution should be observed as to lighting fires, etc., after dusk. Shortly before Christmas the Bays' camp at Buire was bombed by three or four enemy aircraft. Two bombs dropped on the horse lines of C Squadron, with the resulting loss of 11 horses killed and 22 wounded. The line of flight of the attacking aircraft had carried them directly over two of the large squadron huts, in each of which a hundred or more men were sleeping, so it was lucky there were not more serious casualties.

The total losses of the Regiment, during the year 1917, in action and in the trenches, had been:

	Killed.	Died of Wounds.	Wounded.	Missing.	Total.
Officers . .	–	–	8	–	8
Other ranks .	4	7	50	1	62
Totals .	4	7	58	1	70

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elementary state, with the trenches hardly advanced beyond the siting and marking-out stage.

The French General Headquarters expected that the enemy would attack in Champagne on both sides of Rheims. The British view, confirmed by information obtained by our Intelligence Department of the steady movement of enemy reinforcements towards the Cambrai-St. Quentin-La Fère front, and the accumulation of ammunition-dumps in its rear, was that the attack would be made on our right, with the object of forcing it back and breaking the connection between the British and French armies.

The greater part of the front thus menaced was held by the Fifth Army, under General Gough, with its right at Barisis and its left about Gouzeaucourt, in front of Cambrai. Eleven infantry divisions held the line with, for a reserve, three other divisions and three cavalry divisions. Of the latter the 2nd Cavalry Division was on the extreme right; and the other two divisions, the 1st and 3rd, well behind the centre, a few miles east of Péronne – the 3rd Division south and the 1st Division north of the great high road that runs nearly due west and east from Amiens and Villers Bretonneux to St. Quentin.

At the beginning of 1918 the Queen's Bays were at Buire, where a hut camp had been their quarters since the battle of Cambrai. In the first fortnight of the New Year, a considerable amount of work was done in extending and improving the accommodation it afforded. The weather was very cold, with hard frosts every night. Then, for nearly two months – up to the middle of March – the Bays were mostly engaged in holding and working on the defences of the sector of the front assigned as a temporary measure to dismounted detachments from the Cavalry Corps.

The sector had a front of about 4 miles, facing east, and separated by an exceptionally wide No-man's-land (in places

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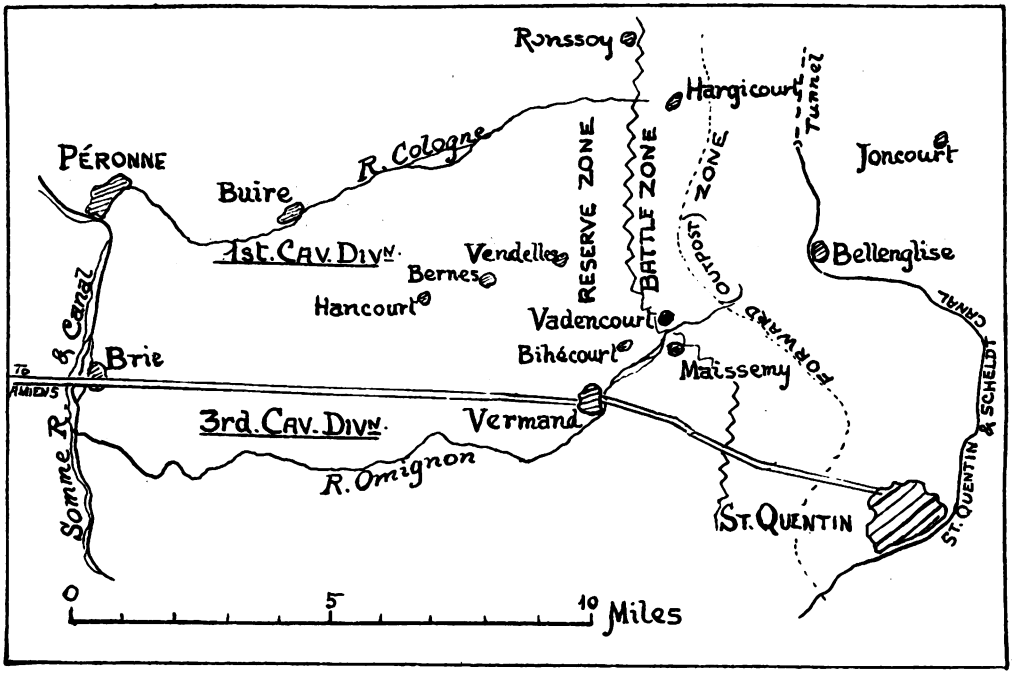

31

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over a mile and a half across) from a strong sector of the Hindenburg line. The left of this formidable entrenched zone, covered by three broad belts of wire, ran along the St. Quentin-Scheldt Canal and over the bold swell of ground through which the waterway tunnels north of Bellenglise. It was protected by advanced posts in No-man's-land.

The sector of the British line assigned to the Cavalry Corps had its right at the crossings of the little river Omignon, near Le Vergier and Maissemy, thence it ran nearly due north along undulating ground, giving a good outlook to the front. Its left was at the head of the Cologne valley, near Ronssoy. Its outpost or advanced line – a chain of detached posts – was nearly complete. A good deal of work had still to be done on the main defence line – the Battle Zone. The third line, or Reserve Zone, was still in a very rudimentary condition. British pioneer battalions were being brought up to work upon it, and these were presently joined by Chinese and Italian Labour Corps. The front was assuming something of an international aspect. At Brie on the Somme, near the point where it is crossed by the Amiens–St. Quentin road, a regiment of American Engineers was completing a fine wide bridge for heavy traffic, and our Royal Engineers had marked out the lines of a strong bridge-head to protect it on the eastern bank. But work on this rearward defence was still to be begun. Meanwhile, it suggested that the High Command realised that the line of the Somme might soon become our main fighting front. It was hoped that the existing front would be successfully held, but it was recognised by those who faced the facts that there could be no certainty on the subject, for the Fifth Army front was not adequately provided either with man-power, gun-power or entrenchments.

By the middle of January the 1st Dismounted Brigade had been formed of detachments from the Queen's Bays,

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the 5th Dragoon Guards and the 11th Hussars, with a strength of 24 officers and 648 other ranks. Its Headquarters was provided by the Queen's Bays, and it was under the command of Lieut.-Colonel Lawson, C.M.G., the Commanding Officer of the Regiment. On January 15, it left Buire for the right sub-sector of the Cavalry Corps front. The weather had broken, and that day and the following night were wet and stormy. The Brigade – accompanied by extra men to bring back the horses – marched from Buire, at 12.30 p.m., by way of Harcourt and Bernes to Bihecourt, where there was a halt and the Brigade was dismounted, the horses being sent back to Buire Camp. The march was then completed on foot to Vadencourt in the Battle Zone. After sunset, guides conducted the various detachments to their positions in the front line. The Queen's Bays detachment, under Lieutenant F. Milnes, M.C., was posted on the right, with the 5th Dragoon Guards detachment on their left, under Captain A. Winterbottom; and the 11th Hussars, under Captain the Hon. S. Pelham, M.C., in support. The relief was completed by 8.30 p.m.

The Dismounted Brigade was not quite a fortnight *in* the line. It was what might be described as for the *time* being a 'quiet sector.' There was at first an impression that it would be a lively one, for one night, after the arrival at the front, the enemy raided a small advanced post of the 11th Hussars, carried off two of them prisoners and left another wounded. But these were the only casualties during the whole tour of duty. Thanks to the width of No-man's-land it was possible to walk about fairly safely in the actual outpost line. There were occasional bursts of shell-fire from the enemy's artillery, but these did little damage. The thaw and the spell of mild weather that followed brought down traverses and breastworks in ruin in the trenches, and the chief work done was making good this damage.

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Patrols were out every night in the front, but there was no fighting. Occasionally a shot was fired when the enemy's patrols were met in the darkness, but they showed no enterprise, and slipped away at the first challenge.

Our patrols in several of their expeditions found that advanced enemy posts were not held during the night. More information, however, was obtained by the use of good telescopes from the higher ground in our main line than by patrols. There was one point from which it was possible thus to see right into Bellenglise, and it was discovered that the Germans were busy bringing up bridging material, apparently to make new crossings over the St. Quentin Canal. Farther off there was a good view of Joncourt, the village where the Bays passed the night after the battle of Le Cateau in August 1914.

On the evening of January 26, the 1st Dismounted Brigade was relieved by the Umballa Brigade of the 5th (Indian) Cavalry Division. The relief began at 5 p.m. and was completed by 8.30. The men marched in small parties to Vendelles, where a convoy of buses was waiting to convey them to Buire Camp.

There were many anticipations that the enemy would begin his projected offensive in February. In 1916 he had launched his great attack on Verdun as early as February 21. As the very essence of his plans must be to seek for a decisive result before the Americans were ready to put any large forces into the line, it might well seem that an early start was all-important. As the weeks slipped by and the Western Front remained quiet, there came, even in quarters where one would imagine the evidence collected by General Headquarters in France would have been available, suggestions of doubts as to whether the enemy's treaty with Russia and his massing of great armies in the west might not be a huge bluff and the prelude to an attempt at peace

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negotiations with the Allies. This was, perhaps, why even a prominent political leader like Mr. Bonar Law said publicly: 'I am sceptical about that German offensive.'

On the menaced front in France, preparations to meet the enemy onset went on, and each week of respite before the trial was counted a gain. Some of our cavalry commanders felt strongly that the best use to make of the mounted divisions, now in reserve behind the threatened front, would be to hold them in readiness for counter-attacks on the Germans in case they should effect a break-through. The country between the Fifth Army front and the line of the Somme was well fitted for cavalry action. Many felt that it would be worth while to give the cavalry divisions some opportunities for training, with a view to these possibilities.

But during these precious weeks they were continually called upon to provide large dismounted detachments for trench duty at the front, and working-parties for making some addition to its defences. They were doing infantry work or carrying out tasks that might have been as well, or better, undertaken by labour corps or parties of navvies from the railways. During February the Bays were thus heavily drawn upon for both purposes, and the remnant of the Regiment left at Buire Camp could do little more than carry on routine duties and look after the horses – their own and those of the dismounted regiment.

On February 1, the Bays sent off a working-party of 4 officers and 200 men to Tincourt, whence they were conveyed by a light railway to Jeancourt, where they were employed all day on trenches belonging to the Reserve Zone system. At dusk they were brought back by the railway to Tincourt, to spend the night at Buire Camp. Next day the working-party was reduced to 3 officers and 150 men, and on this and every day, till the 6th inclusive,

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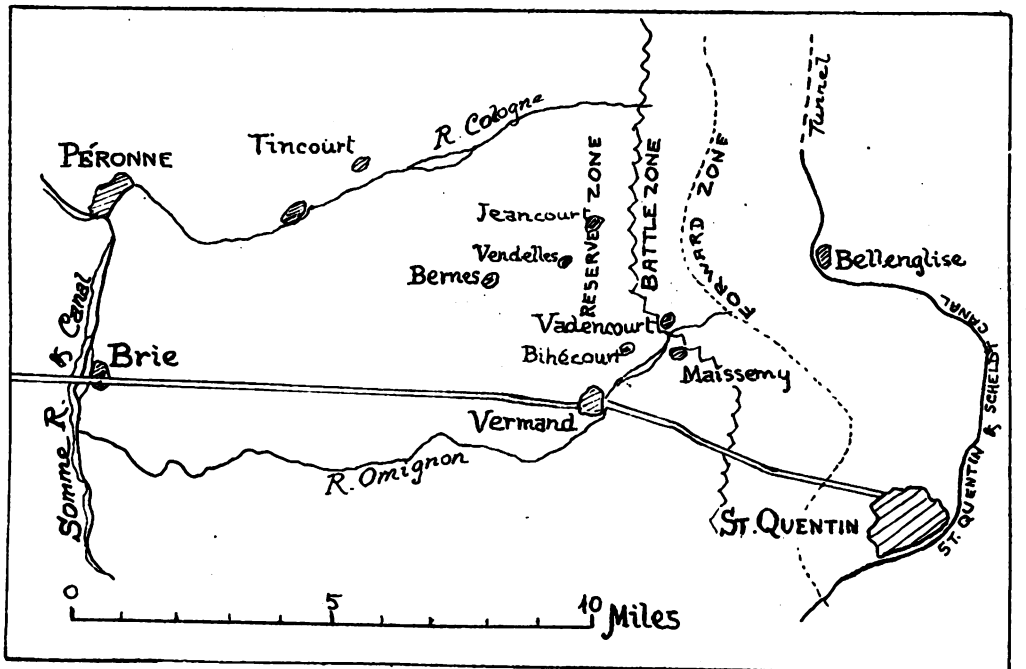

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February, 1918.

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the party carried out the same programme, digging near Jeancourt during the day and coming back to sleep at Buire Camp.

Meanwhile a Composite Pioneer Brigade had been organised, with detachments from the three regiments of the 1st Cavalry Brigade, and placed under the command of Captain F. A. Single, M.C., of the Queen's Bays. The strength of the Bays' contingent was 5 officers and 159 other ranks. The Pioneer Brigade was sent on February 7 to Vermand, to work on the defences in that neighbourhood. It was thus employed until the 11th, when it returned to Buire.

From the 12th to the 14th, the Bays had the now rare experience of having the whole Regiment in camp at Buire. On the 15th the 1st Dismounted Brigade was again sent into the line. It was under the command of Major R. M. Stewart Richardson, M.C., with its headquarters provided by the Bays. The Bays Company, commanded by Lieutenant Sutherland, was made up of 5 officers and 189 other ranks. The Brigade left Buire at noon, and marched to Tincourt, whence they were conveyed by light railway to Vadencourt. Here they relieved the Umballa Dismounted Brigade in the right sub-sector of the Cavalry Corps front, where they had already done a tour of duty in January.

The Dismounted Brigade was in the line until the night of March 4 to 5. The front continued to be fairly quiet. The weather was fine, with, on some days, mist in the early morning hours – a change in the weather that was soon to have important results. Patrols were always out at night and in the misty morning hours. They reconnoitred often up to the enemy's wire; in the wide No-man's-land they occasionally met his parties. But the only fight was on the night of February 17, when a patrol of the 11th Hussars met and was fired upon by a German party. An officer

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was wounded and a sergeant killed, but the enemy made a prompt and rapid retreat into the darkness as soon as their fire was returned.

Our aircraft were busy every day, going out to mark developments behind the enemy front, but the German aircraft showed only occasional activity. On the night of the 17th, a raiding squadron bombed the waggon-lines of the Dismounted Brigade at Vermand. There were occasional outbursts of hostile artillery-fire, usually not serious, for the Germans were anxious to conceal the fact that they were mounting new guns brought from the Eastern Front. On the night of the 25th, the Canadians, who held the sector on the right of that occupied by the Dismounted Brigade, made a raid on the enemy line. The Germans very promptly put down a heavy barrage, which extended to the cavalry front.

On the night of March 4 to 5, the 1st Dismounted Brigade was relieved by the 4th Dismounted Brigade, but instead of returning to Buire, was kept in close reserve at Vendelles, in order to make preparations for a somewhat ambitious raid on the German front.

Its first objective was intended to be an advance post of the enemy in front of the right sub-sector of the cavalry line. From a clump in the neighbourhood the post was generally known as 'The Eleven Trees.' It had always been kept under observation, and it was known that it was not permanently occupied, but it was reported, as the result of special attention to the point, that for some time it had been held every night by a party of from ten to fifteen Germans. According to the account given by an officer of the Bays, who, during these first weeks of 1918, was attached to the Staff of the 1st Cavalry Division, the origin of the proposed raid was the suggestion made by some one connected with the higher command of the Cavalry Corps.

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It was understood that about the middle of March the sector so far held by the Dismounted Cavalry detachments would be handed over to an Infantry Division, and it was suggested that the cavalry, before leaving the line, should show some special activity, have some casualties to report and secure some prisoners for identification purposes. Accordingly the raid on 'The Eleven Trees' was ordered. Doubt was expressed as to whether the post was really occupied, and it was directed that it was to be rushed and the raid carried on forward into the main German trench line. Picked men from the 1st Dismounted Brigade were to be detailed for the operation: hence the special training at Vendelles.

The officer of the Bays already referred to gives this account of what followed:

'It was obvious from the strength of the wire in front of the main enemy line, that such an operation would be very doubtful of success, and as far as I remember the Colonel said so, again stating that he knew, from personal observation by several of his officers, that "Eleven Trees" was occupied. However, this was not good enough, and orders were definitely issued for the raid to include an attempt on the main German line. The troops who were to take part in it were very carefully practised on ground marked out behind the line, and each regiment provided a party of approximately eighty men, the best fighters being chosen in each case.

'As had been expected, "Eleven Trees" was occupied, and the German inhabitants were captured without any difficulty and without casualties on our part. There had, of course, been a certain amount of shooting, and this had warned the Germans in the main position that something was up. On reaching the first barbed wire, a Bangalore torpedo was put in to blow it up. Difficulty was experienced

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in lighting it; meanwhile the Germans opened both rifle- and machine-gun fire in heavy volume all along their front, with the result that the troops engaged in the raid were unable to move at all, and were eventually withdrawn, having lost several valuable lives quite uselessly, whilst they had obtained the necessary prisoners without any difficulty at all.

'An amusing thing happened this night. Mr. Smith, the R.S.M. of the Bays, was on duty counting the numbers of men that returned from the raid, to make certain that no one should be left out. He was very pleased at the success of the operations, and as the men came back to a big chalk pit to be given hot tea and rum, he congratulated them on their efforts. To one little man in particular he was very anxious to express his appreciation, but the only reply he got was "Thank you, thank you, I go to London to-morrow," for he had selected one of the prisoners for a mark of his esteem.'

The Regimental Diary gives some further details of this raid, which took place in the early hours of the night of March 9 to 10. It was led by Major Stewart Richardson, M.C. of the Bays, with the Headquarters of the Regiment. The raiding force was made up of three parties:

'A': Lieutenant Tattersall, 5th Dragoon Guards, with 15 picked men, as a wire-cutting party.

'B': Captain Sutherland, and Second Lieutenant Claudet, with 70 other ranks of the Queen's Bays.

'C': Captain Pelham, M.C., and 70 other ranks, 11th Hussars, with covering parties of 80 other ranks, 5th Dragoon Guards.

The raiders moved out at 9.20 p.m., and found 'Eleven Trees' held by a small party of the enemy. Lieutenant

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Miles, 5th Dragoon Guards, attacked the post, taking two of the enemy prisoners; the rest were killed. The raiders then advanced up to the enemy wire, covered by a barrage. Two Bangalore torpedoes were fired, but failed to do any serious damage to the wire. The raiders threw some bombs over it, but could not get forward as they were now under an intense machine-gun fire. The attempt was therefore abandoned, and the raiders came back, bringing in their wounded and the prisoners. The losses were: Lieutenants Miles and Tattersall (5th Dragoon Guards), wounded; and of other ranks:

Queen's Bays: 3 killed, 17 wounded.
5th Dragoon Guards: 2 killed, 5 wounded.
11th Hussars: 1 killed, 6 wounded.

There were thus 36 casualties, all of them incurred in the hopeless advance against the unbroken wire barrier, after the advanced post had been captured without any loss.

This was the last incident of the occupation of the Cavalry Corps sector. On the 12th all the Dismounted Brigades in the line were relieved by the 24th Infantry Division, brought southward from the Ypres front.

The 1st Dismounted Brigade had returned to Vendelles after the raid, and was broken up, and came back to Buire on March 12.

The British General Headquarters had now the best reason to believe that the German onset was near at hand, that it would be a tremendous westward drive against our right, south of Arras, and that the available attacking force would be at least double that of the defence. Soon the very date was approximately fixed. It would be March 20 or 21. The weather was fine and dry, with cold nights and misty mornings, and further, the enemy was favoured by the fact that the marshes of the Oise in front of our extreme right

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were no longer a serious obstacle to a hostile advance. The rainless weeks since the latter part of February had dried up wide stretches of this marshy ground.

The idea of using the Cavalry Divisions available as a mobile reserve to counter-attack the enemy in case of a break-through was still entertained, and officers' patrols were sent out to make a final reconnaissance of the ground between the menaced front and the line of the Somme. The Bays had been assembled at Buire on the 12th, and next day was spent in getting everything ready for a move. On the 14th, the Regiment marched by way of Cartigny to the cavalry camp at Brie, near the new bridge and the unfinished bridge-head on the Somme.

Here the next two days were spent, and on the 17th there was another move, some 5 miles nearer the front, to the hamlet of Montecourt in the valley of the Omignon. The critical day was now near at hand, and one might have expected that cavalry units would be kept intact, but once more the call for digging-parties came. On arrival at Montecourt, orders were received to send a party of 180 men next morning to Vermand to work on burying a new telegraph cable line between that place and Vadencourt, in the Battle Zone. They were to return to Montecourt Camp in the evening, and go out again next day to continue the cable-burying. The party was thus employed on the Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, March 18–20. On this last day the Regiment received orders at 8.30 a.m. to take part in a concentration of the 1st Cavalry Division on the high ground west of Fléchin, near Bernes. The Bays, minus the working-party, marched off at 10.15 a.m., but were back at Montecourt Camp four hours later.

There had been drizzling rain on the Tuesday, but the weather cleared up in the forenoon of the Wednesday, and the sun shone out again. As the ground dried up, mist rose

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ONE IN THE NECK

The bullet came through the parapet. Zellebeke, 1915

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in the hollows, and after sunset there was a dense fog over all the front. The Germans were strangely quiet. Hardly a shot was fired anywhere. But at 2 a.m. a warning message passed along the British front that an attack was to be expected at dawn. During the night, fog and darkness had limited the range of vision to a few feet. As the daylight came, the haze was still so thick that visibility extended to no more than 50 or 60 yards.

A few minutes after 4.30 a.m. every sleeper in Montecourt Camp was aroused by a tremendous burst of artillery-fire, the first salvo of the enemy bombardment from thousands of guns of all calibres. There were subsidiary bombardments at various points along the allied front from Nieuport to Champagne, intended to create doubt as to where the attack was ready, but the main bombardment was along the 50 miles from Arras southward. Shells rained on the Advanced and Battle Zones of the British front. But, besides this, there was a new feature in the bombardment. Long-range, high-velocity guns were sending their big shells to burst along the roads and about the camps for some 20 miles in rear of our front. The bombardment made havoc in the telegraph and telephone system all over the Advanced and Battle Zones, and the random long-range firing on the back areas of our front did some damage here and there. Soon after the firing began, a shell-burst wrecked the telephone hut at the 1st Cavalry Brigade Headquarters near Montecourt. Our batteries were replying by firing by the map into the fog and darkness over the enemy front.

The Bays were held ready to move at a moment's notice during the morning, but for some hours there was no news from the fighting front. It was not till near 8 a.m. that the actual attack on the Advanced Zone began. The weather conditions favoured the German tactics of 'infiltration' –

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pushing parties forward as the advance guards of attacking columns, which they guided through the intervals of the Advanced Zone. At several places they thickened the fog with smoke-clouds, and mutual support between our posts in the front became practically impossible. Sometimes they did not realise that the enemy was in close contact until they found that the local attack was coming from behind them.

It was not till 1 p.m. that the Regiment and the other units of the 1st Brigade received orders to move up to near Bernes. The fog was now clearing, though mist hung on the ground till near 3 p.m., but the proverbial 'fog of war' was still dense, and there were no definite news of how the battle was going.

Except with the Headquarters Staffs of the larger units, it was impossible that much could be known of what was happening on such a tremendous front, but towards 2 p.m. there was a report at Bernes that in the immediate front all the first line had been lost hours ago. This was not serious, for it was reckoned as an outpost line, but what was serious was the news that at several points, in the near sectors of the front, the enemy had penetrated into the Battle Zone – the line of resistance. Places were named that were familiar to the Bays in their service in the line in the earlier weeks of the year. Le Vergier had been taken, and there was hard fighting close in to Vermand.

The 1st Cavalry Division was the immediate reserve for this part of the line, and orders were now issued that showed the sound idea of using the cavalry as a mobile mounted force to deal with a break-through had been abandoned. Instead of this, orders were issued that each of the three brigades in the division was to send forward a dismounted party from each of its regiments to reinforce or support an

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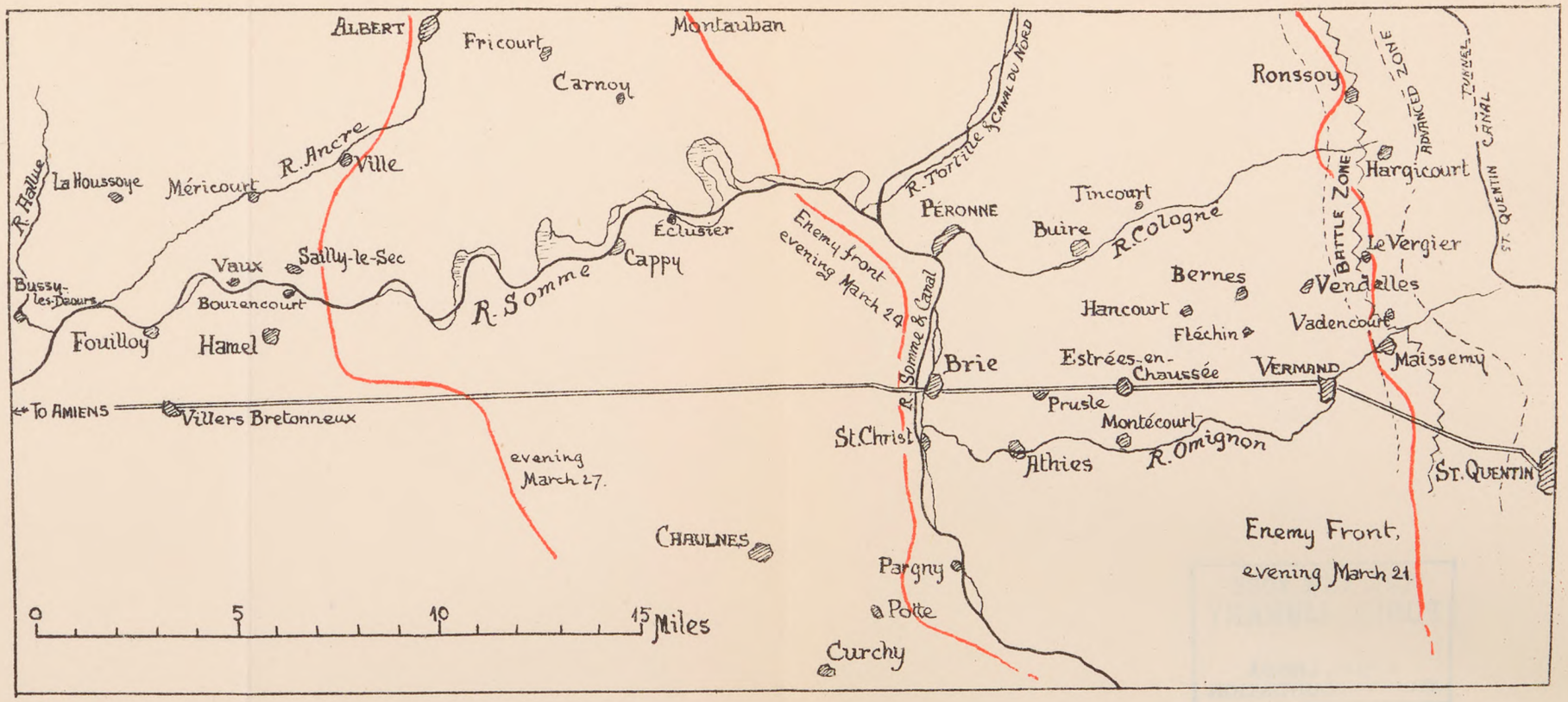

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Map to illustrate Operations of the Queen's Bays in the Retreat before the German offensive. March 21-30. 1918.

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infantry brigade in the Battle Zone. At 3 p.m. the dismounted party of the Bays, under Captain R. T. Barnard, M.C., was sent to support an infantry brigade of the 24th Division at Vendelles. The party was under heavy shell-fire during the afternoon and the following night, and was not withdrawn till noon next day. Lieutenant Waddell was killed, Lieutenants G. A. Gordon and A. W. D. Mitton wounded, and of other ranks 4 were killed, 30 wounded and 1 reported missing.

In following the fortunes of the Regiment during these anxious days of the German offensive, we need only note as the background of our narrative the general course of events, paying more attention to that of the enemy advance in the British right centre region where the Bays were engaged. Through this tract of country ran almost directly east to west, one of the great highways of France, the main road from St. Quentin to Amiens, and Amiens was the objective of the central enemy advance, entrusted to one of the best of the German leaders, Von Marwitz, who had commanded in the battles before Cambrai. He was now in command of the newly organised Eighteenth German Army of some thirty divisions (several of them from the Eastern Front) – over 300,000 combatants. His left attack was delivered in the direction of the Amiens road and the long hollow of the Cologne valley. The line of the Somme from the Péronne southwards was the main barrier to this push if our front gave way.

South of this advance, Hutier's army was flung against the weakest part of our front, the British right. The other wing of the enemy offensive was the Second Army on the German right, under Von Buelow, who the year before had broken the Italian front at Caporetto. His objectives were Bapaume and Arras.

By evening on March 21 – the first day of the colossal

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battle[1] – Von Marwitz had overrun most of the British first line in the centre, and broken into the Battle Zone; but here our line still held, though the enemy had won ground beyond Ronssoy into the upper Cologne valley, and had got beyond Massemy on the Omignon and was pushing for Vermand on the main Amiens road.

Early on Friday, the 22nd, orders were issued for the dismounted cavalry detachments to rejoin their units. As they were scattered in small parties over a considerable extent of front, and communications were slow and difficult, it took some time to find and withdraw them. The Bays' detachment was not taken out of the line till noon. The Regiment, about the same time, had been ordered to move back by way of Estrées-en-Chaussée to Athies on the Omignon. At 6 p.m. the dismounted detachment joined them at Estrées, and got their horses again. The Regiment bivouacked at Athies after dusk, but at 11 p.m. received orders to form an outpost line along the Athies-Prusle road to cover the crossings of the Somme from Brie to St. Christ. It was a fine but bitterly cold night, the first of many nights when there was little rest for any one on the hard-pressed

[1] The battles of the Great War mostly lasted many days, and had a wide region for their battlefield. The official report of the 'Battles Nomenclature Committee,' issued in July 1920, dissected the conflict of March 21 to April 5, 1918, into a series of six battles, grouped together as 'The First Battles of the Somme (1918),' and selected for them the following names:

I. Battle of St. Quentin, 21st–23rd March.
II. First Battle of Bapaume, 24th–25th March.
III. Battle of Rosières, 26th–27th March.
IV. First Battle of Arras, 1918, 28th March.
V. Battle of the Avre, 4th April.
VI. Battle of the Ancre, 5th April.

But the names have not 'caught on' – with the exception of the battle of Arras, which was an outstanding incident in the fighting. Both in popular recollection and in the writings of most of those who have dealt with the history of the war, the enemy offensive of 1918 is treated as one huge battle, and this fits the facts.

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British front, and for many a mile behind it. For the terrible retreat had begun. During the day the enemy had forced the whole of the Battle Zone in the centre, and on our right had pressed forward to the Crozat Canal and threatened to outflank the whole line, and break through between the British and their Allies. At first the French Staff had persisted in their belief that the Champagne front would be attacked, and sent tardy and scanty help, the first reinforcements on the right during the 22nd arriving in small numbers, without artillery and with a very limited supply of cartridges. It was not till later that effective assistance came.

Late in the evening of the 22nd, Gough had decided that the Fifth Army must fall back to the line of the Somme and try to hold the enemy at its crossings. One result of this decision had been the orders received by the Bays at 11 p.m. to form the outpost line from Athies to Prusle – part of the screen through which the hard-pressed and weary defenders of the battle front were to retire. This outpost line was kept up till after daylight on Saturday, the 23rd. At 6.30 a.m. the Regiment was withdrawn and marched back to the crossing of the Somme at St. Christ, and then southwards to the village of Potte, 2 miles west of the crossing at Pargny, where they were to be in reserve behind the 9th Infantry Division, which was one of the first reinforcements brought up to the Somme.

An officer of the Bays who was attached to the Staff of the 2nd Cavalry Brigade, was sent that evening to get the cavalry transport across the new bridge at Brie. The converging streams of the retirement pouring on to and along the St. Quentin-Amiens road, reached the bridge. 'The confusion was appalling,' he says, 'as there were transport of all kinds and descriptions, tanks, flying corps, heavy lorries, heavy guns and parties of Chinese and Italian

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labour corps, all trying to get across the bridge at the same time, added to which the leading people had apparently stopped when they reached what they thought was a safe place west of the bridge. It was a matter of considerable luck that no German aeroplanes visited this particular place that night. However, the confusion was eventually cleared up, and the cavalry transport crossed the river shortly before daylight on the 24th.'

All through Saturday, the 23rd, the enemy had made rapid progress, and by evening was not far from the line of the Somme. At 4.30 p.m. the Bays were brought up close to Pargny in support of the 9th Cavalry Brigade, but at 7 p.m. received orders to move back through Potte to Curchy, where the night was spent. During this night enemy aeroplanes bombed the horse lines and the bivouac. One of the men was killed and 6 wounded. On the Saturday, the enemy had crossed the lower Tortille and closed in upon Péronne. Early on the 24th (Palm Sunday), the Péronne bridge-head and the railway bridge over the Somme were captured, without serious resistance, apparently as the result of a mistaken order. By evening the enemy had won the crossings of the Somme from Péronne to Pargny, and his right had swung forward north of the river bend and almost half-way across the old battlefields of the Somme of 1916.

To meet this northern push all available cavalry were concentrated to form a dismounted force. Under orders received during the night, the Bays marched from Curchy at 6 a.m. on the Sunday, and went by way of Chaulnes to Cappy on the Somme.

During the march, at every road leading westward the movement was delayed, and the way often blocked by retreating transport, more or less disorganised, and crowds of refugees. After a rest at Cappy, there was another move at 3 p.m. The Somme was crossed by the lock-bridge at

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Éclusier, and the Bays reached the 1st Cavalry Division rendezvous at Vaux.

Here orders were received for the 1st Dismounted Division to be formed once more. Colonel Lawson of the Bays was to command it, and the command of the 1st Dismounted Brigade, which included the Bays' detachment under Lieutenant A. J. K. Todd, was assigned to Major Rome (11th Hussars). The Bays, with the 1st Dismounted Brigade, moved up to the Carnoy valley, where the Regiment had bivouacked in the autumn of 1916 during the battle of the Somme. The cavalry was here in support of the 7th Corps, which formed the extreme right of the British line north of the Somme. A critical situation for the Allies was developing, and Sunday had been an anxious day. Across the old battlefields of the Somme our line had just held together, weary with fighting delaying actions against superior numbers, and falling back through the ruined villages and over the ill-repaired tracks and wasted lands that had been won by a slow advance and hard fighting in the two previous years. The Germans had the advantage of the better co-ordinated movements that are more possible in a continuous offensive advance than in improvised resistance during a long retreat. But they were beginning to suffer from the same weariness that day and night fighting and marching inflicted on our men, and they were getting out of reach of their own formidable artillery support and beginning to be handicapped by the lack of roads and railways and organised lines of supply in their rear. But the British resistance was maintained with no little difficulty, for our fighting line was held together by constant improvisations; local initiatives had often to supply the inevitable failure of communication with the higher commands; orders miscarried; here and there direction was lost; and gaps opened, and disaster was often averted by the

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same 'fog of war' that obscured the situation on our side also concealing opportunities from the German leaders.

On this Sunday evening there was a gap opening on the British left, and menace of another and more serious break in the centre, where, partly from misunderstood orders, our line north of the Somme was farther back than the line to the south of it. On this southern side French and British divisions were now working together, but away to the extreme right there was a danger of another break towards Roye and Montdidier. The British and French Governments were in communication on the question of reorganising the High Command, and securing more complete co-operation between the Allies. On the Monday the all-important conference took place at Doullens, which resulted in General Foch being appointed, on the proposal of Sir Douglas Haig, to 'co-ordinate the operations.' It was not the least of Haig's services to the British and the allied cause that he took this generous step. He had long been in friendly relations with the great French leader, and he knew he could rely on him to use his far-sighted grasp of higher interests in the war to avert the most serious danger of the moment – a yielding of the French Government to the view of not a few of their politicians and soldiers, who were tempted to sacrifice united action with the British armies to their anxiety for the protection of Paris. Haig was now using the Cavalry Corps as an emergency force at the critical point where the gap was opening in the centre. North of the river the British were making a slow retirement to the line of the Ancre, with the Dismounted Cavalry on the flank nearest the swampy hollow of the Somme. At 7 a.m. on the Monday morning (March 25), the horses were sent back to Ville-sur-Ancre, and at 9.30 a.m. the 1st Dismounted Brigade, with the Bays party under the command of Lieutenant A. G. K. Todd, moved from

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Carnoy up to Montauban, to support the 2nd and 9th Cavalry Brigades. At 10 a.m., Major Rome, 11th Hussars, took over the command of the Brigade from Colonel Lawson of the Bays, who assumed command of the 1st Dismounted Division. It was all day under heavy artillery-fire, and had to meet and repulse more than one enemy attack. The casualties of the Bays during this day's fighting were: Lieutenant Todd, wounded; and of other ranks, 6 killed and 24 wounded. The position was successfully held until 10 p.m., when orders were received for a withdrawal to a new line.

The 1st Dismounted Brigade acted as the rear-guard of the night march of about 7 miles. The Bays' detachment left Montauban at midnight, picked up the remainder of the Regiment *en route*, and marched through Fricourt to Ville on the Ancre, where it bivouacked. Tuesday, the 26th, was a quiet day. At 11 a.m. the Regiment rejoined its horses, and marched, mounted, to Bussy-les-Daours, in the Hallue valley, about 6 miles east of Amiens. Here there was a restful day of bivouac, and the Regiment was settling down for a quiet night, when at 9 p.m. there came an order to move at once to a brigade rendezvous south of La Houssoye, 8 miles east of Amiens, on the Albert road.

During the day a critical situation had arisen. The enemy had got close up to Albert and was across the Ancre higher up the stream. South of Albert the British line had fallen back into the angle between the little river and the Somme. Farther east the enemy was crossing the latter river, turning the flank of the Fifth Army exposed by the retirement north of the Somme and compelling its hurried retreat. Away to the southward the Germans had captured Roye and were pushing towards Montdidier, driving our French Allies back towards the main Paris railway to Amiens and Calais, which had already been damaged in

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several places by persistent bombing raids of the enemy's airmen. To cut this line, occupy Amiens and divide the allied armies was now the immediate object of the Germans.

General Gough was getting together a scratch force to supply for the dearth of reinforcements. It was collected from Amiens and the neighbourhood, and made up of stragglers from various units, the Staff of a machine-gun school, clerks from Headquarters offices, and army troops, labour corps men, and tunnelling companies with some Canadian and American engineers. It was at first commanded by Major-General Grant, the Chief Engineer of the Fifth Army, and was directed to repair the old advanced line of defence for Amiens, dating from 1915. It ran from Moreuil in the Avre valley by Mezières and Marcelcave to Hamel, following mostly a swell of rising ground between the Avre and the Somme. The improvised reinforcement is remembered as 'Carey's Force,' as in the subsequent fighting it was commanded by a gunner officer, Brigadier-General Sandeman Carey, who had just arrived at Amiens after a term of leave. A further reinforcement for the defence line would be supplied by the cavalry.

On the night of the 26th to the 27th, the Bays, after a short rest in a bitterly cold bivouac at La Houssoye, marched at 2 a.m. to Méricourt on the lower Ancre, where, during the day, they were under fire in support of the 2nd Cavalry Brigade. Three of the men were wounded. Late in the afternoon they moved to Sailly-le-Sec, the march being close in rear of the battle line. At Sailly they were dismounted, and with the rest of the 1st Cavalry Brigade crossed the Somme to fill a gap between the infantry of the 19th Corps and the marshy river banks at Bouzencourt, near Hamel.

Next day the Regiment held Bouzencourt. The enemy was close in front, and his artillery was active, but there were

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no casualties. Colonel Lawson took under his command some detachments of Carey's Force, and was busy organising this reinforcement. On that day there was a welcome success for the British arms at Arras, the enemy making an attempt to widen the base of his offensive by an attack in great force on the defences of the city and the Vimy Ridge, and being defeated with heavy loss.

On March 29 (Good Friday), Colonel Lawson established his headquarters at Hamel, in command of the 1st Dismounted Brigade and detachments of Carey's Force. Captain Sutherland's squadron of the Bays was moved out to the east of Hamel, and all available hands were busy strengthening the defences. Desultory shelling went on all day, and the casualties were Lieutenant Benham and 3 other ranks wounded.

Next day – Saturday, the 30th – there was hard fighting, the enemy making a determined attempt to storm the improvised Amiens defence line. On the left, at 10.30 a.m., they began a heavy bombardment and put down a barrage on Hamel. At 12.30 they began a series of attacks, sending in wave after wave of infantry, but they were repulsed with heavy loss. Early in the day they nearly succeeded in turning the extreme flank on the low ground near the Somme.

Here Captain F. A. Single, M.C., of the Bays, was in command in the trench line, his force being made up of B Squadron and detachments of Carey's Force. There was a perilous moment when, under the enemy's artillery-fire, with the attack closing on their front, some of these auxiliaries wavered and began to give way. Captain Single dashed out to steady them. Springing up on the parapet he successfully urged them to stand fast. But as he did so he fell, mortally wounded. He called out to Captain Sackville West, who was near him, 'For God's sake, don't let these

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men go back,' and propping himself up he continued to encourage them to stand, and they responded to his heroic appeal. West was anxious to secure help for him, but he said, 'Old boy, you are being attacked now, and I won't have myself on your hands; now you must get off and stop them.' He died that night in the casualty clearing station. Colonel Lawson wrote of him: 'We were all so proud and fond of him, his loss is deeply felt by the whole regiment.'

By 4 p.m. the enemy's attacks ceased, and there was only desultory firing. All along our left, from the Hamel to the Luce, the line had held, though farther south the enemy had some local gains. The losses of the Bays this day were Captain Single, killed; Lieutenant A. S. Paul, wounded; and of other ranks, 7 killed, 23 wounded and 2 missing.

Next day (Easter Sunday, March 31) was a quiet one. The enemy's snipers were active but unsuccessful. But on Monday, April 1, they killed Lieutenant D. F. Barclay of the Bays. Five other ranks were wounded by shell-fire that afternoon. After dark, a patrol of C Squadron, under Captain Sutherland, surprised a small enemy post, taking three light machine-guns, killing several of the garrison and bringing back a prisoner, a private of the 228th Infantry Division. On April 2, the enemy was fairly quiet; there was very little shelling, but his aircraft were active. The detachment of Carey's Force was withdrawn and replaced in Colonel Lawson's command by the 18th and 19th Hussars. That night the enemy's artillery was very active, suggesting that another attack was imminent; but Wednesday, the 3rd, was another quiet day, with only some artillery activity in the afternoon. Just after dusk a raiding party of 2 officers and 20 men of the Bays went out to try to surprise a German machine-gun post, but a listening post gave the alarm, and the raiders came back under heavy fire.

This was for the Regiment the last day in the line during

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the long battle. In the night the 14th Division took over the Hamel sector from Colonel Lawson. The Regiment then marched back to Fouilloy on the Somme, where their horses were waiting for them, and then continued the night march mounted, to bivouac at Bussy-les-Daours.

The Bays had been fourteen days and nights on the move or in action, under most trying conditions. Their losses from March 21 to April 3 were:

	Killed.	Wounded.	Missing.	Totals
Officers . . .	2	6	–	8
Other ranks . . .	20	105	3	128
Totals . .	22	111	3	136

This was well over 25 per cent. of the effective strength of the Regiment.

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CHAPTER XXIII

The Victorious Advance – The Armistice

When the Bays were taken out of the line at Hamel on April 3, the German drive for Amiens was slowing down, the allied front was being stabilised, and reinforcements were arriving. Officially, the battle of the Somme, which began on March 21, is counted as having ended on April 5. After this, though there was still some fighting on the Amiens front and some local gains for the enemy, the Germans were engaged in new offensive enterprises, first on the Flanders front and later in Champagne. But there were now sufficient infantry divisions available for it to be no longer necessary to employ cavalry in trench fighting. The Bays were not again in action till the victorious allied advance began on August 8. This gave the Regiment a much needed time for rest and re-fitting, and then for training for their proper work as cavalry.

The Bays spent a day in bivouac at Bussy-les-Daours, and left it in the afternoon of April 4 to march into billets in the suburbs of Amiens, where they stayed till the 10th, engaged in reorganisation and re-equipment. The enemy had got some long-range guns forward to the high ground east of the city, beyond Villers-Bretonneux, and his aircraft were busy after dark. Shells did some damage in Amiens, and at night there was now and then the buzzing of aeroplanes overhead, the boom of bursting bombs and the sharp reports of our high-angle anti-aircraft guns. The only injury to the cathedral – one of the most famous in all France – was done by one of these. Happily, it was not serious, a small 'dud' shell coming through the roof of an aisle, without exploding.

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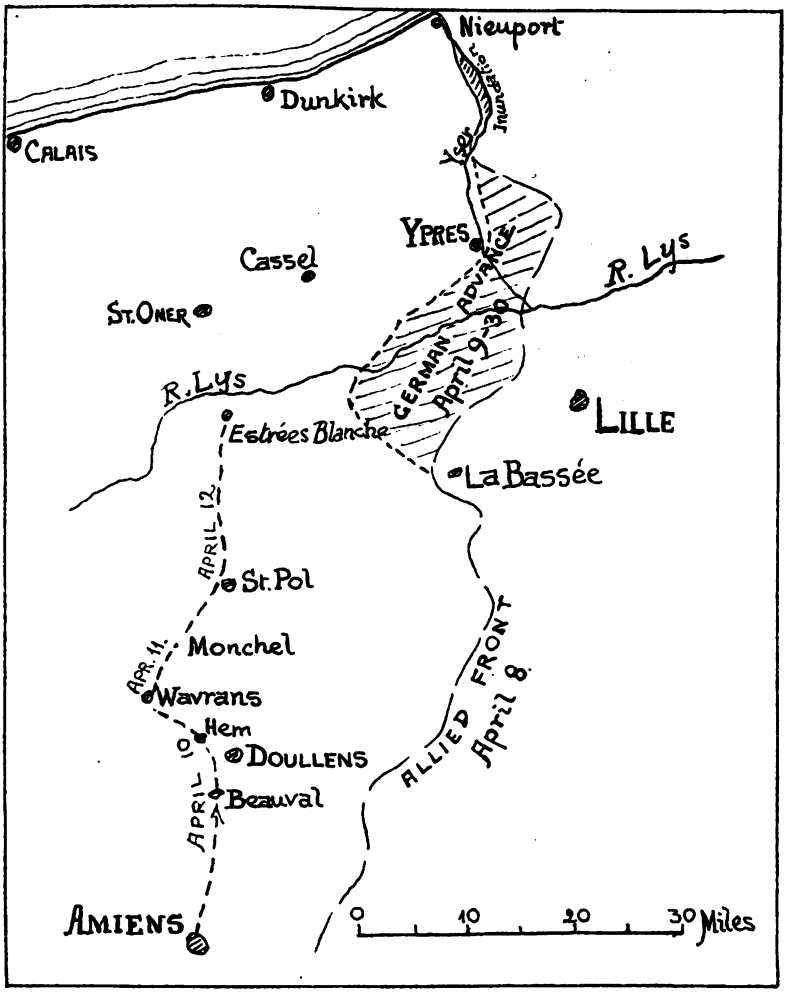

Ch. XXII. (34) — Move to Estrées, April 1918.

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On the 5th, the first reinforcement was received, and went a long way to refill the thinned ranks of the Regiment. It consisted of 100 N.C.O.'s and troopers turned over from the Essex Yeomanry to the Bays.

On the 10th, at 2 p.m., the Regiment left Amiens, and made a march of 25 miles northward by Beauval and Hem to Wavrans (9 miles north-west of Doullens), arriving there at 9 p.m. Next morning there was a short march of 6 miles to Monchel. On the 12th they started at 1 p.m. on another long march of 27 miles, still northward, to Estrée-Blanche, 15 miles north of St. Pol and between that town and St. Omer.

On leaving Amiens the Bays had been informed that they were now going into General Headquarters Reserve, and the northward move brought them close up to the old Flanders front. As they neared Estrée on the 12th, they heard again the cannon thunder away to the north-east. On the 9th – the day before they left Amiens – the enemy had, in the early hours of the day, launched their new offensive of Von Quaast's army on a long front from La Bassée to near Ypres. The British line was mostly held by divisions that had suffered heavily in the battles on the Somme, and at the first point of impact the enemy's onset, covered by a heavy spring mist, had fallen upon the sector held by the Portuguese contingent. By that evening there was a breach of 10 miles wide in our front line, and next day it was widened to 15 miles, and the enemy's advance on our right had penetrated for 6 miles. Another army – Von Arnim's – then extended the attack on the enemy's right. It was a strong push to outflank Ypres and the Yser line, and force the Allies back on the Channel ports. The struggle went on far into the month of May, with days when the situation was one of extreme peril. But finally the enemy's onset was held – not, however, until

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much ground won at heavy cost in earlier years had been lost.

The Bays remained at Estrée-Blanche till the middle of May. They were not called into action, but while they carried on their training they were day and night held ready to move into the fight at brief notice, and Estrée was always within sound of the guns.

On April 17, Colonel Lawson, who had commanded the Bays since April 1, 1915, relinquished the command of the Regiment to take over that of the 2nd Cavalry Brigade, and was succeeded by Lieut.-Colonel Ing, D.S.O.

Incidents in May were a parade at Enquin-les-Mines, when the Divisional Commander presented decorations to the 1st Cavalry Brigade; and a 'stand to' from 6 to 8 a.m. on the 8th. It was a day of hard fighting in the Kemmel Hills, south of Ypres. On the 15th there was a Divisional Field Day of the 1st and 2nd Cavalry Brigades in the training area south of Thérouanne.

The situation on the Flanders front was now 'well in hand,' and on May 17 the Regiment left Estrée for billets at Delette. Here there was a halt until the 21st, when there began a two days' move, in hot summer weather, southwards by Sains-les-Fressin to Raye-sur-Authie.

Here the Regiment made a long stay – from May 22 to July 17. A very good rifle range was available here, and full advantage was taken of it for a considerable amount of musketry training. On May 31 the Brigade Final of the A.R.A. Troop Rifle Competition was carried out, with the result that a troop of the 11th Hussars came out first; No. 4 troop, A Squadron of the Bays, was second; and the 11th Hussars third.

In June there was a series of Divisional, Brigade and Regimental Staff Rides. On Sunday, the 16th, after the Regimental Church Parade, the Divisional Commander

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distributed decorations, and Lieutenant P. G. Hamlin, of the U.S. Army, and Lieutenant Schwier, attached to the Bays, received the riband of the Military Cross.

On June 10, the Regimental Mounted Sports took place, and it was announced in Orders that, in the *London Gazette* of June 5 and 8, it was recorded that the Military Cross had been awarded to Lieutenant (Acting Captain and Adjutant) F. M. Whitmore Smith, and the Distinguished Conduct Medal to Regimental Quartermaster-Sergeant J. T. Bird.

On July 14, the Regiment, with the 1st Cavalry Brigade, left Raye-sur-Authie and made a 25-mile march by way of Auxi-le-Château, Hem and Doullens to billets at Authieule, 2 miles south-east of the last-named place. They remained here until August 5, busy with the final preparations for the coming allied advance. A sign that active service was near at hand was the fact, in the last weeks of July, that officers were employed in reconnoitring the forward areas of the British front south-east of Doullens, and in the Somme valley in the region of Amiens.

By the middle of July there had gradually developed a complete change in the situation in France. At the beginning of the year the Allies were anxiously standing on the defensive, and the initiative was on the enemy's side. From March 21 onward, the Germans had been exhausting their reserves in a series of costly offensives, successfully at the outset, but falling short of the hoped-for decisive result, while in the spring and the early summer the heavy losses of the Allies were being more than compensated by an immense flow of reinforcements. The British were bringing divisions from the Near East, and the American armies were being hurried across the Atlantic. Month after month the balance of numbers was turning against the invaders of France, and the advantage they had derived from the

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collapse of Russia and the transfer of their armies from the Eastern to the Western Front, was being outweighed.

The essential point of the German plan was that a swift and decisive success should be secured before the American armies could come into the field in any large numbers. The hope of this was disappearing when the drive towards Amiens and the attempt to separate the French and English armies failed, and this failure was followed by the Flanders offensive and the push for the Channel ports which was held up in the middle of May. In the closing days of that month the enemy made a last effort, which had at first a rapid and surprising success. It was directed against the French front, from the Aisne heights to the positions about Rheims. The Germans attacked on May 27. By that evening they had stormed the Aisne heights and driven back the French on a front of 25 miles between the Oise and Rheims, and their central advance had gone forward for 15 miles. They had captured thousands of prisoners and hundreds of guns, and in the next three days they reached the Marne, driving an immense wedge into the allied line and regaining ground that had been securely held against them since the autumn of 1914. But their efforts to cross the Marne or to widen their front by taking Rheims and the strong positions of the heights of Champagne, failed; and on July 8, Foch flung French and American armies against the western flank of the German salient, and won the first great victory that heralded the beginning of the allied counter-offensive.

Once more the tide of battle had turned upon the Marne. But before this success the combined allied offensive, which was to secure the advance to victory in the summer and autumn, was being planned. Foch, as Commander-in-Chief of the allied armies, is rightly given due credit for the magnificent triumph; but it is also to the credit of the

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famous French war leader that he acted in loyal and comrade-like collaboration with Haig, and modified his original plans to meet the well-considered views of his British colleague.

To Haig was due the sound suggestion, accepted by Foch while he was still preparing his attack of July 18, that at the outset the British advance should avoid a direct push over the war-wasted country of the old battlefields of the Somme, and strike right and left of this region, making it untenable for the enemy by these converging flank attacks. The first was to be made on the Amiens front. It was intended to put an end to the German menace to Amiens and the Paris railway, and at the same time by a push towards the important railway junction at Chaulnes, cut the chief line of communications of the great enemy salient towards Roye and Montdidier that was a standing threat to Paris.

The battle of Amiens (August 8–12) was the first step in the allied advance to victory – a turning-point in the war. Haig planned the operation so that it would come as a surprise to the enemy. With marvellous skill and complete success he arranged that the attacking force should be secretly concentrated on the Amiens front, while at the same time misleading the enemy by making him expect that the first British advance would be attempted in Flanders.

It was on July 13 that Haig was able to issue his order to General Rawlinson, commanding the Fourth British Army, to prepare for an advance from Amiens in an easterly and south-easterly direction. The French Eighth Army, under General Debeny, was placed directly under Haig's orders for this purpose. The enemy's attention was attracted to the Flanders front by ostentatious preparations for an advance there. New guns were mounted and assembly trenches dug in sight of his observation posts, and on fine days his aircraft scouts brought back reports and photo-

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graphs showing our infantry with tank support practising attacks on marked-out positions. The Germans had no suspicion that these shows were carefully organised where they could be easily seen.

The reinforcement of the Fourth Army on the Amiens front was carried out by a series of night marches. A remarkably successful operation was the moving up of some 400 tanks, which marched in the darkness, and were camouflaged or hidden away in woods during the day, so that the enemy did not even suspect their approach until they pushed through his lines in the light of the dawn on the battle day.

The Bays left their billets at Authieule after dark on the evening of August 5, and marched by way of Beauval and Bonneville to Fieffes, about 7 miles south-west of Doullens. The day was spent there, and at midnight they left Fieffes and marched by way of Vignacourt and St. Vaast, to Argoeuvres, $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles north-west of Amiens – a short march of about 10 miles, so that every one was able to have a good rest. It was the eve of the battle.

At 11 p.m. on the 7th, the Regiment marched by Longpré to Amiens, passed through its streets in the darkness and went out by the Roye road, across the Somme, to join the Brigade rendezvous at a small wood near Longueau, a little to the east of the confluence of the Somme and Avre. The rendezvous was reached at 3.15 a.m. (summer time) on the 8th. The dawn would soon come, but there was the heavy ground mist of a hot summer morning to mask all movements from the enemy.[1] Our guns were silent, and the Germans had not the slightest idea of what was coming.

[1]This was helpful in the immediate preparation of the attack and the first contact with the enemy. But it had serious drawbacks in the first stage of the battle. Until the mist cleared, it made aircraft observation all but impossible, and hampered communication between the units in the advance. The mist did not entirely disappear till near 10 p.m.

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The ground in our front, south of the Somme, was favourable to the attack. Between the marshy margins of the river and narrow valley of the smaller stream of the Luce there was an undulating chalk plateau. The soil above the bed-rock was not deep, the ground was hard and dry after the recent fine weather, and it was not anywhere heavily cratered by prolonged artillery-fire. There were wide stretches of open fields, with an absence of scattered farmsteads to serve as ready-made strong-points for the defence. The farmsteads were grouped in the villages, each village surrounded by orchards and clumps of trees, and the barns and stables were lightly built, mostly of mere 'wattle and daub.' On the plateau the fields had not the boundaries of wall, ditch and hedge that might serve as obstacles to an advance. Though the enemy had held the ground for weeks, practically nothing had been done to entrench it, probably because the Germans were hoping for a further push to the westward. The plateau was crossed by two lines of old entrenchments, part of defences of Amiens begun in 1915. But they were weak lines, that could not be compared with the elaborate works that had grown up along the hostile fronts during the long years of trench warfare. The enemy had not even troubled to turn them round, and they still faced eastward, with masses of rusty wire entanglements on their original front. Altogether the ground was eminently favourable to the advance of our tanks and infantry, and promised openings for the intervention of the cavalry, while there was no need of any preparatory bombardment.

It was therefore with a creeping barrage that the British guns opened fire with a sudden crash and roar along a front of some 9 miles, in the light of the dawn at 4.20 a.m. – about an hour before sunrise. Simultaneously seven Infantry Divisions – British, Canadian and Australian – moved

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forward, with some 400 tanks to clear the way. There was swift and almost startling success. The tanks had at last their full opportunity, and all along the front, from the Somme to the extreme right, they went over the enemy first line without meeting anywhere with serious resistance. The infantry, following close upon them, had at first to deal only with disorganised and often broken opponents. Away to the south the French army of Debeney advanced three-quarters of an hour later, gradually prolonging the attack to the right.

The 1st Cavalry Division moved forward from its rendezvous as the guns opened fire, and followed the advance of a Canadian Infantry Division, eagerly expecting the order to pass through them and push on to exploit their success. At 5.20 the Cavalry Division halted in shelter of the margin of the woods west of Villers-Bretonneux, and just behind the original British front line. The orders for the infantry advance directed that the First Objective – the 'Green Line' – beyond the inner line of the old Amiens defences – was to be reached and the ground up to it cleared of the enemy in the first two hours after zero. There was then to be a two hours' interval in the advance. This would give a margin for any unexpected delay in making good the first stage of the attack, and ample time for bringing up through the divisions now established on the 'Green Line' the troops detailed for the next stage of the advance, up to the 'Red Line,' the Second Objective. This being won, it was hoped further to exploit the success by pushing forward beyond the outer line of the old Amiens defences. This would mean a total advance of about 6 miles. It was anticipated that the cavalry and light tanks would find opportunities for intervening in the second and the final stages of the advance.

The Canadians, pushing forward in front of the 1st

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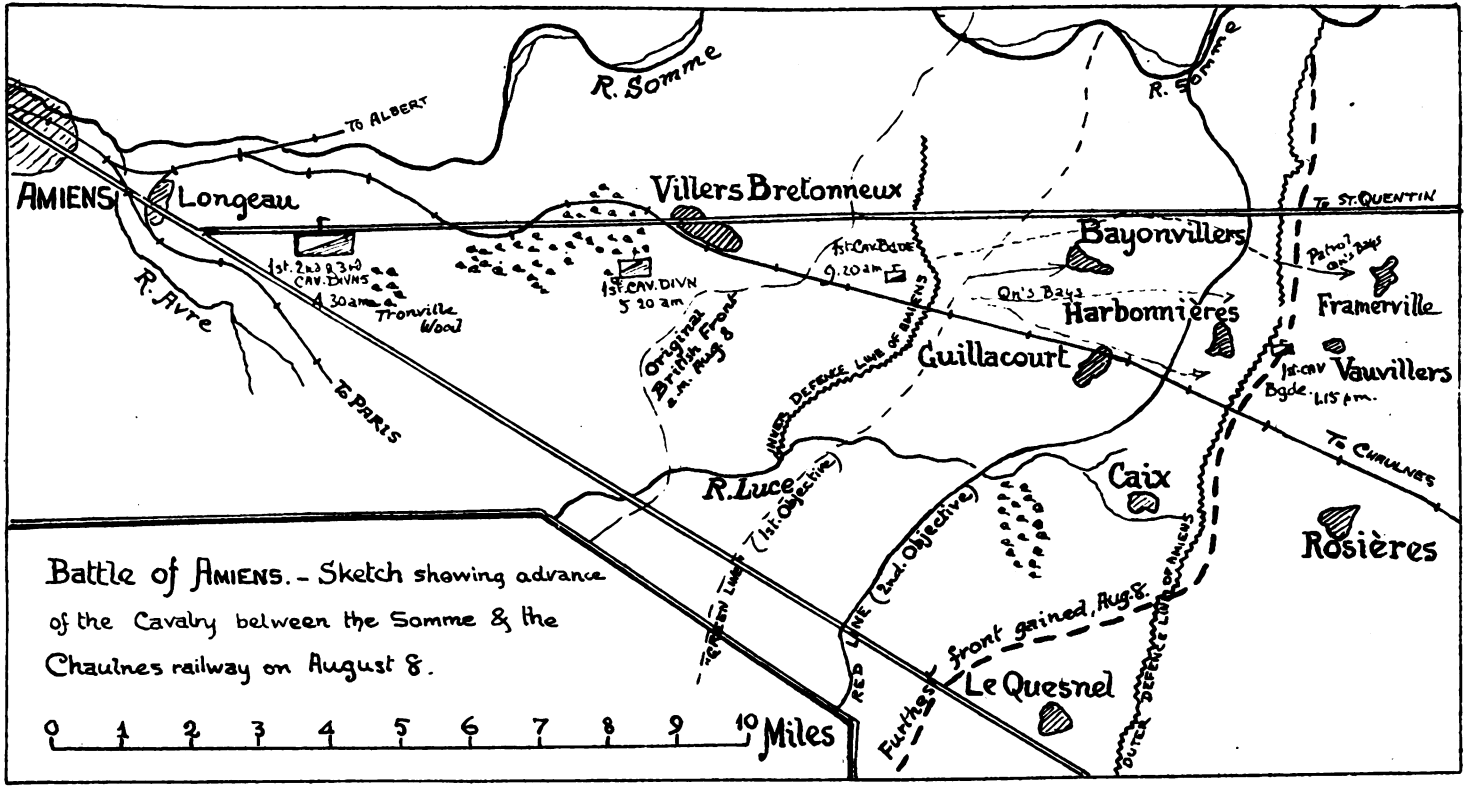

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Cavalry Division, were well up to the time-table of attack. By 6.20 they were on the 'Green Line' across the St. Quentin road, and between it and the Chaulnes railway. Wounded men were straggling back, all telling of a successful opening of the battle, and there was further proof of this in the convoys of prisoners, under small escorts, the captured Germans taking their fate very cheerily, and obviously not sorry to be out of the fight.

To the right, south of the railway, it was more than an hour before the advance reached the 'Green Line.' The next stage of the attack was now being prepared, the infantry of the second wave passing through to the front for the advance to be resumed at 8.20 a.m. Meanwhile the 1st Cavalry Division moved forward past Villers-Bretonneux, halting again east of the village. The Bays, the leading Regiment of its 1st Brigade, were to operate between the St. Quentin road and the Amiens-Chaulnes railway; the other two brigades were to act south of the railway-line.

At 7.40 a.m. the Bays were sent forward with orders to keep touch with the coming infantry advance, and take the first opportunity that offered to pass through it, and act against the retiring enemy, taking the general direction due east between the villages of Bayonvillers and Harbonnières. North of the railway an Australian division was now forming up to carry on the attack. As soon as it advanced, the Bays followed it up. A Squadron (Captain Barnard) was directed to move on the right towards Harbonnières, B Squadron (Captain Magnay) on the left towards Bayonvillers, C Squadron being kept in reserve.

The advanced squadrons sent out patrols to keep touch with the infantry, A's patrol under command of Lieutenant Solaire, B's under Lieutenant Cockerill.

B Squadron advanced on the left, with their left bounded by the Amiens-Péronne-St. Quentin road, and A Squadron

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on their right. Lieutenant Cockerill in front pushed forward quickly, and somehow got right through the enemy's rear-guard, and into Bayonvillers, where he found the Germans in great confusion, and presently got into action with one of our own armoured cars, which came in at the other end of the village from the Amiens road – both at first mistaking each other for enemies. Extricating himself from the confusion in the village, Cockerill sent back a report that it was still partly held by the enemy, and then pushed eastwards on a daring ride towards Framerville.

Meanwhile, Magnay found the advance of B Squadron rendered rather slow by numbers of field-telephone wires that lay in the high grass diagonally to the line of movement, and upset the horses. However, the Squadron went on through the Australian infantry, about half-way between Villers Bretonneux and a light railway on a low bank, that crossed the main Amiens road a little west of Bayonvillers. Just before reaching the line the Squadron came under heavy fire of rifles and hidden machine-guns, and suffered some casualties.

The Squadron was now ordered to dismount, the horses being sent back to cover, in charge of Lieutenant Sackville West. A dismounted action continued for some time along the railway bank, and soon the enemy were seen to be falling back in extended order. Lieutenant C. Carabine had performed the gallant act of bringing in a wounded man to safety under fire. The Whippet tanks were now coming up with the infantry. The Squadron was remounted, and as the Australians occupied Bayonvillers, it moved east to regain touch with the Regiment.

A Squadron, with C Squadron in support, had meanwhile pushed on with the attack towards Harbonnières. About 9.15 it came in contact with a party of the enemy south of the village, and was fired on by them. Two troops

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immediately charged the Germans, who evidently had not much fight left in them, for they were driven off, leaving a score of dead on the ground, and the Bays captured 26 prisoners and a couple of machine-guns. They had already, during their advance, secured two trench-mortars and rounded up 30 prisoners.

The Squadron then moved towards the tunnel under the railway-line south of Harbonnières, near which the right troop broke up another party of the retiring enemy. Seven of them were cut down and 2 taken prisoners, and a machine-gun and a Lewis-gun were captured.

By 9.30 a.m. the Australian advance had cleared all the ground up to the 'Red Line' west of Harbonnières, and were beginning their efforts to capture the place. The Squadron joined up with them, but the Germans were holding on in force about the village and to the east of it. Our advance was stopped by heavy machine-gun fire, and the Bays retired to the valley south of the railway, where its embankment gave good cover.

The right troop, under Lieutenant Solaire, now came upon another party of the enemy, killing 8 of them and capturing a waggon, 8 horses and 9 prisoners. Some of our new type of light Whippet tanks had been detailed to act with the cavalry. It was the first time they had been in action. Two of them now joined the Bays, and their Commander reported that he was about to attack the enemy on the Harbonnières-Rosières road. It was arranged that A and B Squadrons should co-operate in the attempt, with a Whippet going forward right and left of them. But one of the tanks broke down and the other was knocked out by a direct hit with a shell. The Squadrons had to retire after coming under heavy fire. Captain Barnard, M.C., and Lieutenants Tomlinson and Solaire were wounded.

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Lieutenant Hannan then took over the command of A Squadron, which moved into position along the railway-line, facing south, so as to bring an effective rifle and Hotchkiss gun-fire to bear upon the bodies of the enemy which were retiring on that side towards Rosières. A successful dash was made at two waggons that came within fairly easy reach of the position. Their escort was cut up, and the waggons captured, with the officer in charge of them.

It was now about 10 o'clock. The Australians supported by tanks were fighting their way in Harbonnières, and the reserve squadron of the Bays (C) galloped up from the valley south of the village, and took up a dismounted position on the flank of the advance, with the machine-gun section. Two Royal Horse Artillery guns were in support on the higher ground near the railway. The Squadron captured a lorry full of officers' kit that tried to escape from Harbonnières, but the men in charge of it got away. Soon after ten the Australians cleared the Germans out of the village and hoisted their Dominion flag on its church tower.

The enemy made a stand for a while along the line of the old Amiens outer defences east of Harbonnières. An Australian detachment joined the Bays, and these remounted in order to go forward with them. But a tank arrived with the report that the enemy in front were massing for a counter-attack. The horses were then sent back to cover, and the Bays remained dismounted in support of the Australians. The counter-attack, however, did not develop, but patrols sent forward by the Bays came under heavy machine-gun fire, and some Whippet tanks failed in an attempt to knock out the machine-guns. There was for a while something like a deadlock. But the Germans presently fell back across the old trench line without making any serious stand till they were clear of it to the eastward. The abandoned line was occupied and the advance on this

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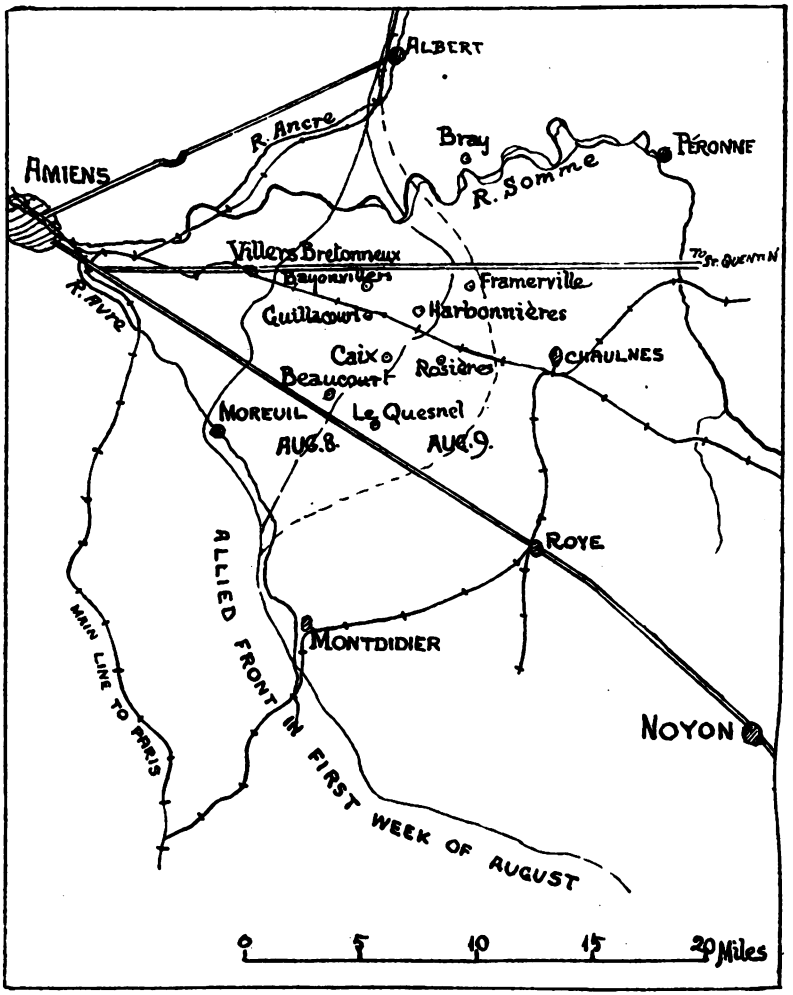

Ch. XXIII.

(36) Battle of Amiens_Allied Advance, Aug. 8 & 9, 1918 —

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sector of the front had now reached all the objectives assigned to it in the battle orders. Farther south, the enemy's resistance was stiffening.

About 1.30 p.m. the Commanding Officer of the Bays received a message from Brigade Headquarters that the 11th Hussars, who had been sent round to the north of Harbonnières were moving eastward, and that he was to be reinforced by another machine-gun section and a squadron of the 5th Dragoon Guards. He was also informed that B Squadron was withdrawn to Brigade Reserve.

For the next two hours the Bays remained in support of the Australians, but nothing of importance happened. The new front was being secured and the captured ground cleared up. At 3.30 p.m. orders came for the Bays to withdraw. They went back by the south side of the railway to Guillacourt, where they found B Squadron.

Lieutenant Cockerill's patrol had at last rejoined it. In the morning he had pushed on past Bayonvillers and across the wooded hollow that runs down to the Somme, north of Harbonnières. On the high ground east of the hollow, on a light-railway track, the patrol came upon a small train of supplies that had been brought to a dead stop and set on fire by our shells. Its crew of three men surrendered to Lieutenant Cockerill. One of them was badly scorched and nearly naked, for he had had to tear off burning clothes to save his life. The patrol seems to have hit on a gap in the enemy's lines, and no doubt its small numbers enabled it to escape identification amid the confusion that existed in the rear of the German fighting-line. While the Australians were clearing Harbonnières and pushing on to the old trench line, this handful of the Bays got beyond it, and about 11 a.m. struck the road between Vauvillers and Framerville. On the road and on both sides of it, parties of fugitives were straggling back. The patrol claimed that

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they rounded up many of them, the total captures being 2 officers and 70 other ranks. No doubt the prompt surrender of these was due to their imagining the little party of British horsemen must have a strong body of comrades near at hand. The prisoners were passed back to the nearest body of the Australians.

The final exploit of the party was to reconnoitre Framerville. They soon realised that it was held by the enemy. They were fired upon by a couple of armoured cars. A horse was killed and one of the men wounded. Rightly or wrongly they suspected that the armoured cars were British, but they could not get in touch with them to decide whether they were friends or foes. After this experience, it was decided that it was time to turn back. The little party had to find their way through the enemy, coming at one time under machine-gun fire. But they were soon in touch with the Australians, and before long had learned that their squadron was at Guillacourt, where they rejoined.

The battle gradually died down in the later hours of the afternoon. The task assigned for the day had been accomplished, and preparations were begun to resume operations next morning. The Germans were too occupied with improvising a new line to be able to venture on any counter-attacks. The most they could do was to bring back some order out of the confusion resulting from the collapse of their front in the early morning. It had been a splendid success for the Allies, and the main results had been secured by the British, Canadians and Australians. Many thousands of prisoners had been taken, and hundreds of guns of all kinds were the trophies of the day. Huge dumps of supplies in endless variety had been abandoned by the enemy. Some of these had been set on fire and burned for hours, but most were intact. 'The 8th of August,' wrote Ludendorff in his *Memoirs*, 'was a black day for the German arms.'

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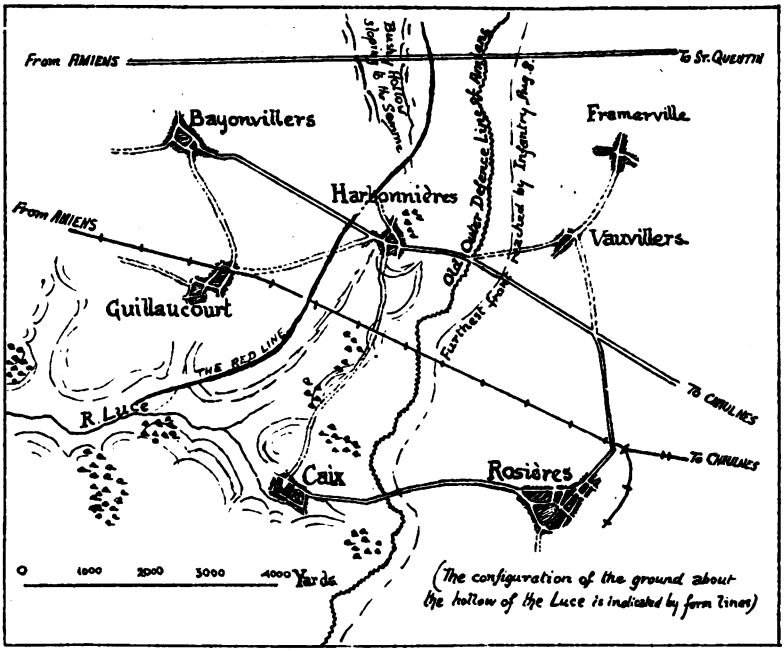

Ch. XXIII. (37) Ground on which the Regiment was in Action, Aug. 8/9 1918.

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The Bays spent the night after the battle in bivouac near Guillacourt. But it was anything but a restful night, for the German long-range artillery kept up an incessant shell-fire on the lost ground, and the bivouac was thus repeatedly bombarded, though, happily, there were no casualties. At 5 a.m. on the 9th, with the rest of the 1st Brigade, the Regiment saddled up and moved about a mile and a half northwards to the edge of a stretch of woodlands, where they were in reserve for most of the day. At 4 p.m. there was a move southwards to the valley between Caix and Rosières, where the rest of the day was spent, without going into action. It had been a day of further progress against increasing enemy resistance.

The Brigade bivouacked near Caix. Between 9 and 10 that evening there was a German air-raid. The bivouac of the Bays was bombed and there were a few casualties. At 5 a.m. on August 10, there was a move to the valley north of Caix, where most of the day was spent, while the battle continued to the eastward, the allied progress now slowing down, but still gaining some ground. At 3.15 p.m. the Bays saddled up in order to move southward to the high ground between Caix and Le Quesnel. An enemy counter-attack was expected in this direction, but nothing happened, and after dark the Regiment bivouacked in the valley north of Le Quesnel, where it had a quiet night.

The next day – August 11 – was spent here. The battle was coming to an end, and Haig broke it off on the 12th,[1] and a few days later struck his second great blow, launching

[1]In his dispatch describing the advance in August, Sir Douglas Haig said 'Our advance east of Amiens had now reached the general line of the old Roye-Chaulnes defences. The derelict battle area, which now lay before our troops, scarred by old trench lines, pitted with shell-holes and crossed in all directions by tangled belts of wire – the whole covered with the wild vegetation of two years – presented unrivalled opportunities for stubborn machine-gun defence.' (It was also impossible ground for cavalry.)

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the attack of Byng's Third Army, north of the old Somme battlefields, striking south-eastwards towards the high ground about Bapaume.

In view of this decision to end the battle, the 1st Cavalry Brigade received orders at 8.30 p.m. on August 11 to move back to Longeau near Amiens. The Brigade made a night march of about 14 miles, with the Bays as the leading Regiment. They reached Longeau at 3 a.m. on the 12th, after having been again and again harassed by enemy aircraft. There were 9 casualties among the men, and several horses were killed or wounded.

There was a rest at Longeau until the morning of August 17, when a new move began, this time northwards, to place some of the mounted forces in easy reach of Byng's army, with a view to their possible action in the coming 'battle of Bapaume.' In the night of the 16th to the 17th, the Bays marched from Longeau, by Doullens, to the billeting area of Boisergues, a few miles west of the town in the Authie valley. A couple of days were spent here, and on the 19th the Regiment joined the Brigade in a march to Sarton, east of Doullens. The next day was spent there, and on the 21st the Brigade joined the 1st Cavalry Division in its concentration area at Foncquevillers.

That day Byng launched the central attack of the Third Army against the German front north-west of Bapaume. The 2nd and 9th Cavalry Brigades were close up to the front from which the attack started, in readiness to intervene if an opportunity offered. The 1st Cavalry Brigade was kept in reserve, with the 11th Hussars in touch with the 2nd Brigade, and the Bays holding an intervening position between them and the Headquarters at Foncquevillers. They spent most of the day at Bucquoy-les-Essarts, and had a few casualties by shell-fire while watering the horses in Foncquevillers. But it was realised that there was no

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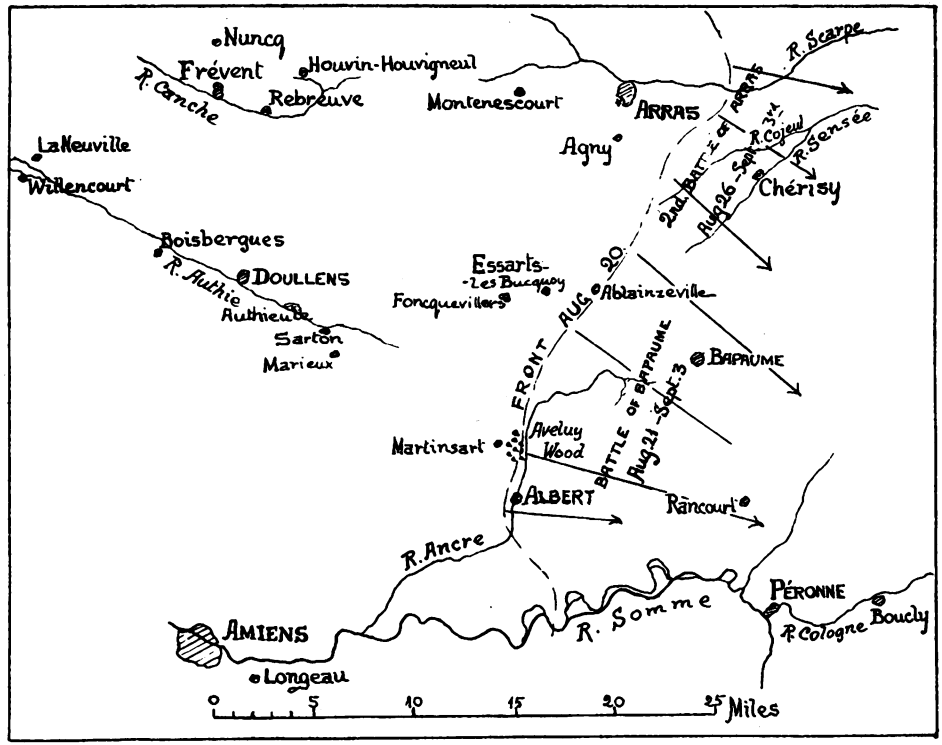

Ch XXIII. (38) — Moves & Billets, Aug. 12 - Sept. 30, 1918.

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likelihood of any immediate opening for the mounted troops, and at 6.35 p.m. the Regiment moved back to billets at Authieule.

They remained here during the following day while the right and left of the Third Army were attacking and gaining ground to bring its two wings into line with the centre, for the general advance on the 23rd.

There were large gains of ground that day. The enemy was fighting a rear-guard battle on a long front, and the British advance was well forward beyond the line of the Ancre River, and pressing on towards Bapaume and the Albert road. It was anticipated that next day might see a break of the enemy front and a chance for the cavalry. So at 5.40 p.m. the Bays were ordered to saddle up, and during the night the 1st Cavalry Brigade, with the 5th Dragoon Guards leading, marched by Foncquevillers to Ablainzeville.

The Regiment reached the place at 1.20 a.m. and had a few hours' rest. At 6.30 a.m. on the 24th it was moved a few hundred yards forward, and at 8 p.m. there was a further forward move to relieve the 5th Dragoon Guards, who had been from an early hour sending out patrols to keep touch with the situation. This duty was now taken over by the Bays. Since dawn a great battle had been in progress from about Albert to the ground north and north-west of Bapaume. There was steady progress during the day, but there was no opportunity for the cavalry to intervene. The Bays were thus close spectators of the advance. All day the Regiment was intermittently shelled, but there was only one casualty.

Late that evening the 1st Cavalry Brigade was withdrawn, and during the night and the early daylight hours of the 25th, the Bays marched back to Authieule near Doullens, where they arrived at 6 a.m. Here they remained

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till the afternoon of the 27th. At 4 p.m. that day, they moved at short notice northwards to Bebreuve, on the little river Canche a few miles east of Frevent, arriving there at 7 p.m. This movement placed them, with other cavalry units in reserve, within a short distance in rear of a fresh extension of our great advance. On the 25th, Horne, with the First Army, had come into action on the left of Byng, extending our fighting front for some 10 miles more to the northward, and pushing forward from Vimy and Arras over the old battlefields of 1917.

The Bays spent four days at Bebreuve, and on the last day of August, late in the afternoon, made a short march of not quite 3 miles to billets at Houvin-Houvigneul, where they remained until the evening of September 3. On that day and the next, Horne, advancing on the Arras front, attacked and stormed the enemy defences of the Drocourt-Queant switch, the last organised trench line west of the Canal du Nord. The 1st Cavalry Brigade was called up during the fighting within nearer reach of the battleground. The Bays marched from Houvin-Houvigneul soon after midnight of September 3–4, and reached Montenescourt, west of Arras, at 4 a.m. After an hour's halt there, they marched with the rest of the Brigade to Cherisy, south-east of Arras, the whole distance covered in the two marches being 29 miles.

The day was spent near Cherisy, on ground that had been the margin of the battlefield the day before, but the Brigade was not sent into action. At 7 that evening the Bays marched back to Agny, just south of Arras, and bivouacked there for the night. At 2 p.m. next day they marched to join the rest of the Brigade at Lattre-St. Quentin, on the road from Arras, by Avesnes to Frevent. At 8.30 a.m. on the 6th, the Regiment marched with the Brigade to the Château of Madame de Formint, in the outskirts of Frevent,

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which was reached at noon. Then, from September 7 to the 16th, the Bays were in billets at Frevent.

On the 17th, the period of rest and training ended with a Corps Tactical Exercise with troops, in which all the units in the district were engaged. It began at dawn and ended late in the afternoon. At 5.15 a.m. the Bays joined the 1st Cavalry Brigade rendezvous at Nuncq, north of Frevent.

There was then a move southwards across the Canche valley to force the crossings of the Authie River. The 'Cease Fire' sounded at 4 p.m., when the Bays were at Willencourt, in support of the 5th Dragoon Guards, who were crossing at La Neuville. The Regiment had covered close on 30 miles since dawn.

Until the 23rd the Bays were billeted in the two last-named villages, and on the 24th they began a long march eastward. The first three moves were by night, to Authiuele, near Doullens, on the 24th; to Martinsart, near Aveluy Wood on the Ancre, on the 25th; and across the old Somme battlefields to Government Farm, 2 miles north-east of Rancourt, on the 26th. Here there was a halt for two days. On September 30 there was a march to Boucly, a small place on the Cologne River, east of Péronne. Here the Regiment bivouacked for the first days of October, under orders to be ready to move at three hours' notice.

During these last days of September and first days of October, what may well be described as the last decisive battle on the Western Front was developing into a victory that forced the enemy from the only fully organised defence line that yet remained in the line of our advance. All that followed in the few weeks that were left of the war was the reaping of the results thus placed within reach of the Allies.

In August and the first three weeks of September all that the enemy had won in the March offensive had been regained. On September 11 and 12 the American armies,

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under Pershing, had come into action as an independent force and won back the St. Mihiel salient, south of Verdun, which the Germans had held since 1914.

From near Verdun to the sea, the German front – a line of about 250 miles – was a huge convex curve to the westward. It was an entrenched line, on which they hoped to make a stand until the winter put an end to the year's operations. On their right, across the Flanders flats, it was nearly the line they had held for years, along the Yser and in front of Lille to Lens. In the centre, before Cambrai and St. Quentin, they relied upon the immense strength of the Hindenburg line, which had been fortifying since the spring of 1917, and which included the ready-made barriers of the Canal du Nord and the Scheldt Canal. Their left, facing southwards in Champagne, was a line they had held successfully against repeated French attacks. The main allied offensive, that of Haig's First, Third and Fourth British Armies, assisted on the right by an American division and the First French Army, under Debeney, had now come up close to the Hindenburg line, and the next stroke was to be against this central position – the keystone of the German convex front. To realise the importance of this step in our advance, one must keep in mind that it was more than a mere local offensive. It was to be the prelude to a general converging advance of all the allied armies, the main British drive being directed north-west towards Mons and Maubeuge, seizing the junctions of the two main enemy lines of supply, the railways from Metz to Hirson behind the enemy's left, and the main German line from Cologne by Liege and Namur, through the narrow bottle-neck between the forest hills of the Ardennes and the Dutch frontier. This gave the prospect of a British victory on the Hindenburg line being a decisive success. It would end the war of entrenchments and clear the way to open warfare,

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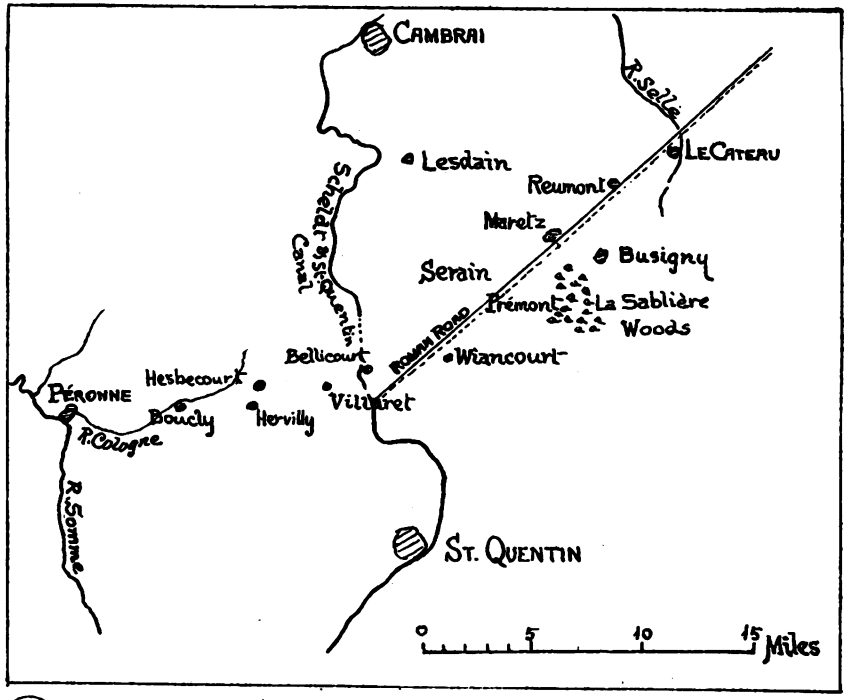

Ch XXIII. (39) — Crossing of St. Quentin Canal & Advance on Le Cateau. —

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under conditions that would make further loss of ground by the enemy disastrous.

The greatest battle of the war – the greatest of all battles the world has yet seen – began on September 26 with the opening of Haig's operations against the crossings of the Nord and Scheldt Canals, and the barrier of the Hindenburg line. This was the central effort of the Allies, but only part of a general advance – for while the nine days' struggle for the Hindenburg line went on, there was a forward move of British, French and Belgians in Flanders, a French forward drive in Champagne, and the advance of the American armies against the wooded fastness of the Argonne. The eastward march of the Bays to the neighbourhood of Péronne was part of a concentration of the British cavalry on the right rear of our advance, in view of the opportunities that might be anticipated for the mounted arm when the last organised and entrenched barrier-line of the invaders was broken, and a defeated enemy was being forced back across fairly open country, presenting no serious obstacles to the pursuit, and this under conditions that made every mile of ground lost the source of growing difficulties either for an organised stand or a secure retreat.

The Hindenburg line and its support, the Beaurevoir line, were captured in the last days of September and the first week of October. On October 2, it was anticipated that there might be an opening for the cavalry to operate on the right flank of the advance in the direction of Le Cateau. At 9.15 a.m. the Bays saddled up and marched by way of Hervilly and Hesbecourt to the cavalry rendezvous in a valley about a mile north of Villaret. But there was no opportunity for action, and late in the afternoon the Regiment returned to Boucly. There was much the same experience next day – a start for Villaret at 10.30 a.m., a long halt there and a return to Boucly in the evening.

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Three quiet days were spent in billets, and on October 7 another move eastward began with a short march to a bivouac at Grand Priel Farm, near Villaret. On the 8th, there was a march at dawn, the Regiment with the 1st Cavalry Brigade crossing the St. Quentin-Scheldt Canal at Bellicourt. The enemy was being forced back on a front of several miles towards the line of the Selle, a little river that runs down from the high ground about Le Cateau to the Scheldt.

The cavalry were working with an American corps which was advancing astride of the old Roman road that runs straight as an arrow north-eastward over the Le Cateau heights, and by the margin of the Mormal Forest to near Mons. The victorious allied advance was winning its way to the ground on which the British Expeditionary Force had been in action on the first difficult days of the Great War. The 1st Cavalry Brigade was moving a little to the south of the Roman road and generally parallel to it.

When the Americans were closing on the villages of Prémont and Serain, the 1st Cavalry Division tried to advance beyond this line, but was held up, and its 1st Cavalry Brigade was then ordered to push forward between Prémont and the Sablière Woods in the direction of Maretz. The enemy was believed to be giving way, and it was hoped a break-through might be effected. But the woods were strongly held, and the leading regiment of the Brigade, the 11th Hussars, came under very heavy fire and was unable to get beyond a valley about a mile south-west of Prémont. C Squadron of the Bays, sent on to keep touch with the Hussars, came under heavy shell-fire near Prémont and had to withdraw to the valley. Here the Brigade remained till 6 p.m., when they were ordered to withdraw to bivouac near Wiancourt. Late in the day the enemy abandoned Prémont and Serain, and the Americans established their

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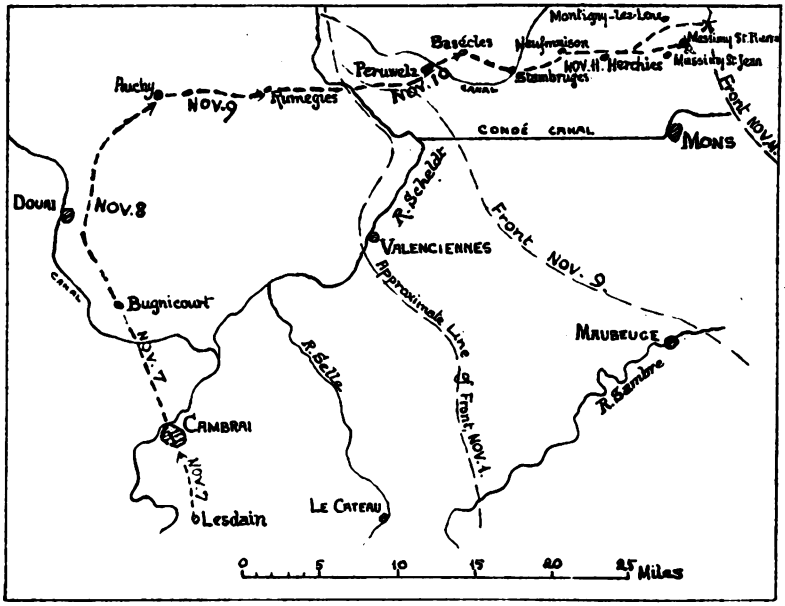

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line a little east of these villages. Until near midnight the cavalry bivouac was intermittently shelled by the German long-range guns. The losses of the Bays were 1 man killed and 5 wounded.

Early on October 9 the Regiment marched from Wiancourt to a position west of Maretz. The enemy was now retiring. The 1st Cavalry Division was kept in reserve all day, but towards evening the 3rd Cavalry Division, which had passed through infantry, was close up to Le Cateau. The Bays had only one casualty – Captain Misa, M.C., wounded while on liaison duty. That night the Bays bivouacked with the Brigade near Busigny station, which the Germans had evacuated early in the day.

Next day the advance was continued up to the west bank of the Selle River, where it was found that the enemy was making a serious stand on favourable ground on its farther side. For the Bays it was an uneventful day. They marched at 5 a.m. to a forward position near Reumont, and spent the day there in reserve and under slight shell-fire occasionally. In the evening there was a march back to the bivouac near Busigny. The next day was spent there, and on the 12th the Bays moved into billets at Maretz. Like most of the villages in the district, it was nearly intact. The enemy had been in undisturbed possession of them since 1914, and in the recent fighting our artillery had, as far as possible, spared them for the sake of their French inhabitants. Most of these had clung to their homes even during the battle, and those who had fled were coming back.

The Regiment remained for several days at Maretz, while heavy fighting was in progress along the Selle. On October 25, the day when the line of the little river was forced at last, the Bays made a short march of 7 miles to billets at Lesdain, south-east of Cambrai.

Here the Bays stayed until November 7. Meanwhile, in

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the first week of November the last serious fighting of the British advance had carried it to a line across the upper Sambre and through the Mormal Forest to the margin of the first battlefield of Mons, and the negotiations for an armistice had begun. On the evening of the 6th, orders were received for the Regiment to leave Lesdain next day and join the left of our main advance now closing on Maubeuge and Mons. On the 7th, the Bays marched through Cambrai to billets at Bugnicourt, on the road to Douai. The next day's march was to Auchy, and on the 9th they reached the village of Rumegies, close up to the Belgian frontier. The march of the 10th was on Belgian ground through the little town of Peruwelz to the village of Basecles, 14 miles from Mons.

At 7 a.m. on the 11th, the Bays marched eastward from Basecles, crossing a canal line at Stambruges, moving through Flemish woodlands to Neufmaison, and passing through the front of our advancing infantry about a mile north-west of Herchies.

Patrols were now sent out in advance, and shortly after 10 a.m. the Bays had their last fight in the Great War. Almost at the same time a patrol from C Squadron came in contact with a patrol of Uhlans 2 miles east of Montigny-le-Lens (about 7 miles north of Mons), and a patrol from B Squadron encountered another party of Uhlans at the eastern exit of Masnuy St. Pierre. Twelve prisoners were taken without the Bays suffering any casualties. Then came, almost immediately, a direction to stand fast until further orders. There was the sound of firing from the direction of Mons. At 11 a.m. it ceased. The armistice had begun, and the Great War was over.

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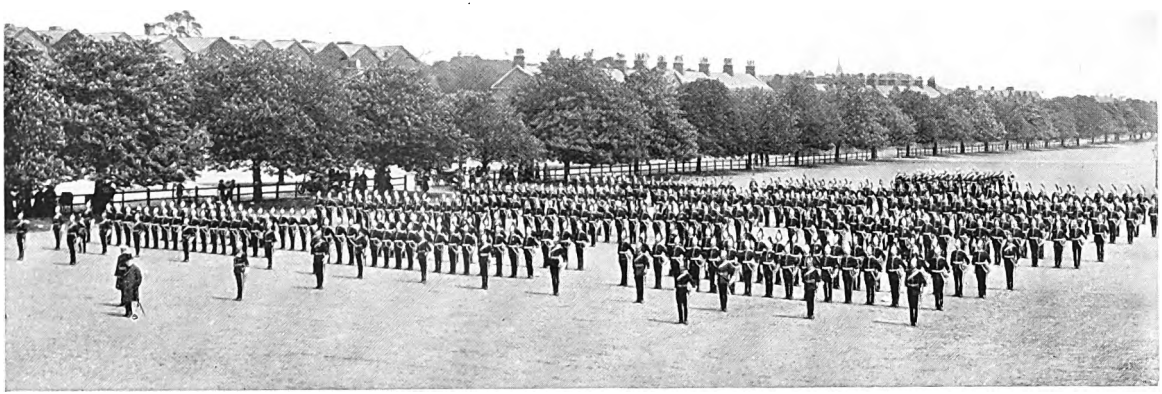

2ND DRAGOON GUARDS, QUEEN'S BAYS. ALDERSHOT

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CHAPTER XXIV

After the Great War

The Regiment spent the night after Armistice Day in rather crowded billets among the Belgian villagers of Montignies and Masnuy. It was a quiet night, strangely quiet for those who had lived so long within sound of the guns, even when they were not actually in the line. An outpost line covered the billets, for the war was not yet officially ended. It was only an armistice as yet, but there was a confident feeling that the armistice meant peace. Next morning there was a march of about 18 miles back to billets in the town of Peruwelz.

Under the terms of the armistice the Germans had undertaken not only to evacuate what remained in their possession of French and Belgian territory, but also to retire across the Rhine. British, French, Belgian and American contingents were to occupy for some time to come all the German territory on its left bank, and bridge-heads on the eastern side of the river covering the crossings at Cologne, Coblenz and Mainz. Beyond the line thus to be held by the Allies, a neutral zone was to be established from the Dutch frontier to Switzerland.

The Germans continued their retirement, but there was an interval of some days before the Allies began to move forward after them. Immediate movement would have been difficult. The roads in front were blocked by the retiring masses of the enemy, with their transport converging on the gap south of the Dutch frontier, and even if they had been clear it would have been by no means easy at once to move any considerable British force farther eastward. The last stage of our advance had been so rapid

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that the armies in our line had got far from their available railheads, and the intervening roads had been cut up badly, with craters blown at every defile and at most of the cross-roads by the enemy rear-guards. It was no easy matter to bring up supplies to the existing front, and there could be no forward move until something had been done to re-organise road and railway transport and effect the necessary repairs.

The Bays, with the 1st Cavalry Brigade, were to be in the vanguard of the Army of Occupation, but this needful delay in beginning the forward move gave them five days' rest at Peruwelz. On November 5 – a Friday – there was a church parade in the market square of the little town in the afternoon. It was a service of thanksgiving for the cessation of hostilities, at which detachments from all units of the Brigade were present. It expressed the general feeling of those who had borne the real stress of the long war. It was only at home in England that some fire-eating politicians were regretting that the fighting was at an end. Among the men at the front there was a feeling of satisfaction that a march into Germany would demonstrate to all the world the completeness of the allied victory, and that the advance would end on the Rhine. The march to the Rhine began on November 17, when the Bays left Peruwelz and moved to Roeulx, north-east of Mons. Even while still on Belgian ground, every move in this final advance was made under active service conditions, and an outpost line covered the front of the billets or bivouacs at each halt. Next day there was a short march to Manage, where the Regiment remained in billets till the morning of the 21st.

On that day there was a 20-mile march to Mazy in the Sambre valley, west of Namur, the Regiment passing over ground the French had lost in the frontier battle of August 1914. Next day the march was continued north of Namur

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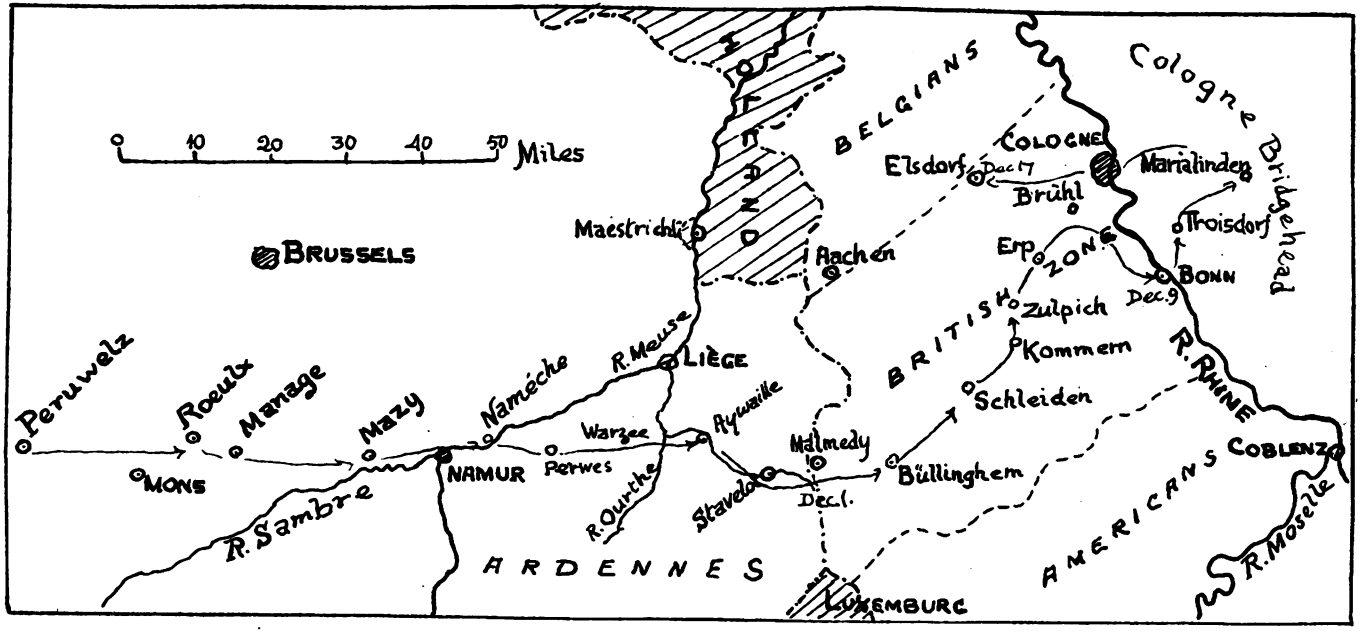

Ch. XXIV. (41) — The March to the Rhine.

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ıto the Meuse valley by Naméche – the 'bottle-neck' etween the Dutch frontier and the wooded hills of the ırdennes – the defile that a few days before had been rowded and sometimes blocked by the retreating masses of he enemy. There still had to be occasional halts to allow he German armies to clear the ground in front. The halt hat day was at the village of Bonneville, where the Bays emained in billets till the 24th, when they moved on to 3elle Maison, where there was another halt in billets till he 27th.

The Regiment was now moving through the wooded :ountry on the northern fringe of the Ardennes. On the :7th they pushed on across the deep hollow of the Ourthe /alley to Aywaille. Here the Commanding Officer of the Regiment, Colonel Ing, D.S.O., took over the command of :he Brigade – Brigadier-General Sewell, D.S.O., going away ɔn leave.

There was again a halt, and it was not until the 29th that the Bays left Aywaille, and made a 25-mile march by way of Stavelot to the hamlet of Vaulx-Richard, just inside the Belgian frontier. Here they remained in billets during the 30th.

Sunday, December 1, was a day to be remembered. At 9 a.m. the Bays marched as the leading Regiment of the Brigade across the now open frontier of the German Rhineland near Malmedy.[1] So far the troops had been greeted in

[1]Stavelot and Malmedy were places often heard of in the anxious discussions on the danger of war in the years immediately before 1914. Malmedy had developed from a small border garrison, just inside the German frontier, into a training camp, where all the year round units of all arms were kept, almost on a war footing. The wooded hill country of the district afforded abundant ground for useful tactical training. But the Belgian Government was exposed to repeated attacks by the opposition in the Parliament at Brussels, when it was agreed that a railway and a tunnel through the rising ground on the border should be constructed to link up the west German railhead at Malmedy with the Belgian railway system at Stavelot. Business reasons were put forward to justify this

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town, village and hamlet by the rejoicing Belgians, welcoming them as their liberators. How would they be received by the Germans, a conquered people who might well regard them as invaders, and who, a few days before, had witnessed the passage of their retreating armies? But nowhere was there the least demonstration of hostility. The Rhinelanders were everywhere friendly in their attitude. They, too, were rejoicing that the war was over, and they were looking forward hopefully to long years of peace under their new Republic, often with an unconcealed pleasure at the fact that the Prusso-German Imperial system was a thing of the past.

That day the march of some 20 miles was through pleasant hill and woodland country, not unlike the northern Ardennes. By the afternoon the Brigade was in billets about Büllinghem, with the Regimental Headquarters of the Bays at Krinkelt village and an outpost line in front. There was a rest here till the 4th, when the march was continued to Schleiden, a distance of 25 miles. On the 5th, there was another move of 15 miles to Kommern, and next day the march was by way of Zulpich to the Erp district, leaving the hill country and reaching the level lands around Cologne.

After a day's rest in billets near Erp, there was a 10-mile march eastward to the Rhine. The Brigade was billeted in villages between Cologne and Bonn, with an outpost line holding the road between these places and watching the river-line between Rodenkirchen and Hersel. On the 10th the Bays marched into Bonn, and next day was spent in billets there. The cavalry were now to be employed in covering the occupation of the bridge-head area on the east bank of the great river.

arrangement, but the existence of the frontier camp gave it some military significance.

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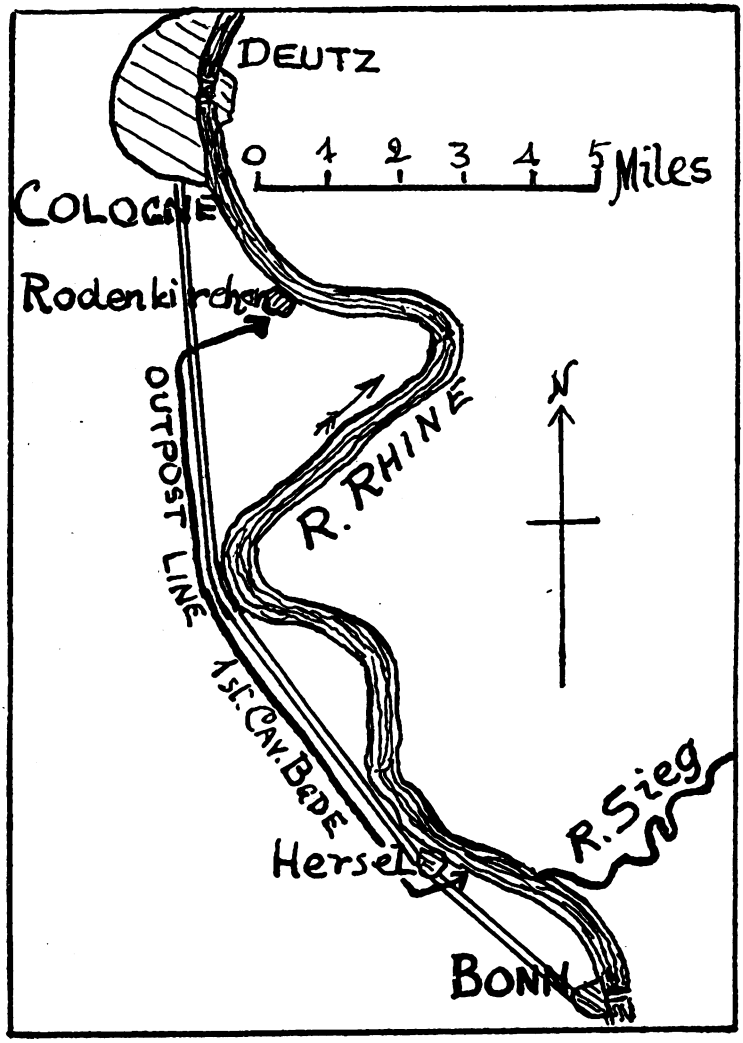

—First Outpost Line on the Rhine—

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On December 12, at 10 a.m., the Bays, as the leading Regiment of the Brigade, crossed the Rhine by the great steel bridge at Bonn. There was a halt on the east bank for an inspection by General Currie, commanding the Canadian Corps. Then came a march to Troisdorf in the Sieg valley, to take over billets and establish an outpost line. Next day there was further advance of 15 miles to Marialinden, on the far eastern curve of the bridge-head front. The Bays were in billets here till the 16th, when the front was taken over by Canadian troops, and the Regiment marched back to Cologne, now the headquarters of the British Army of Occupation.

There was a rest for a day in Cologne, and then, on the 17th, the Bays recrossed the Rhine and made a march westward for 20 miles to Elsdorf, a little town in a busy, industrial district. Here the Regiment was to spend some three months, billeted in 'winter quarters.' This march to Elsdorf was the first stage in the return home.

While at Elsdorf, the Regiment gradually demobilised. By the end of March it was reduced to its skeleton cadre. To a member of this cadre, who wields a vivid and vivacious pen, we are indebted for the following account of the return to England and of some of the Regiment's subsequent experiences in Syria and Palestine. Prior to their start for home, it had been made known to the Bays that their new destination was to be York:

'At Antwerp, late in the evening of the 29th March 1919, there embarked aboard the ex-Russian steamer *Mogileff*, bound for Southampton, which was reached at 8 a.m. on the 31st, a bare handful of cavalrymen in full war equipment – the remnants of three stalwart regiments who had departed to assist in stemming the tide of war in 1914.

'The Bays were some 60 strong, and the 11th and 19th

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Hussars about the same. And what of the 600 of whom each regiment had been composed? The casualty clearing stations, the demobilisation camps, the war hospitals, and the little wooden crosses at Néry, around the Somme and at Ypres, accounted for the remainder.

'The s.s. *Mogileff* was as war-weary and as worse for wear as were they who welcomed her accommodation. Floating mines were plentiful in home waters at that time, but the cadre of the Bays were too excited to give even the mines much thought.

'Major R. O. Milner was very proud of his command, as much as because they were still the Bays as because quite a number of the present representative little band had come right through the war – none unscathed albeit.

'Despite the unearthly hour of their eventual arrival at York on April 1, and long before the first streaks of dawn heralded the awakening day, Colonel G. H. Ing, C.M.G., D.S.O., who had preceded the Regiment from Elsdorf, was awaiting them at the railway station. Throughout the busy hours which are necessarily a part of the programme when a regiment is transferred from one station to another and ceases to be on active service, the few remaining Bays were inspired by the thought "back to the peace-time footing." It is strange that however the Regiment may decrease or increase its strength, the quantity of baggage remains about the same, so that the days of arriving and departing called for a real effort, and much hard work for these, the survivors.

'The good people of York were old friends, remembering as they did the smart stable-jacket and forage-cap of 1899. Within twenty-four hours the cadre of the Regiment had settled down in their "home from home," with early matrimony as an extra inducement, if one was necessary. The official reception by the mayor and the leading citizens,

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OFFICER, 1890

From the painting by Richard Simkin

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followed by tea, a concert and a dance, was also the official beginning of a long sojourn to be, and the people of York were as proud of the Bays as though they had been their own private property.

'Those with a correct perspective of things knew that a year or two's really hard graft lay ahead, if the old standard was to be attained.

'"Won't be much else but foot-drill and riding-school for the next two years," the old soldiers told the recruits when they began to arrive, and among the latter were miners from Northumberland, textile workers from the Midlands, shop assistants from the cities and men of every sort from everywhere. They would be received by Regimental Sergeant-Major Evans and the Adjutant.

'"Well, boy, where do you come from?"

'"I was in the Notts and Jocks, sir."

'"Oh! You're in the Bays now; go and get some dinner," and they filed away.

'"Gee, when I joined the Jocks they didn't tell me to get some dinner; they sent me on coal-fatigue."

'Such is the manner in which the Bays became Bays from the very first.

'There was plenty of work to do. War equipment to be handed in, peace equipment to be acquired, foot-drill, arm-drill, and a few horses now to be cared for. The parade growing stronger every day, efforts were made, and eventually successful, to re-establish the married families in barracks. If any one thing more than the generally good behaviour of the men made the Regiment popular at York, it was the excellence of the band programmes on the barrack-square on Sundays – thanks to that fine old master, Mr. J. Faulkner, who had nursed it since the beginning of the year.

'The weeks slipped by rapidly, and the re-forming of the

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Bays to something like their normal proportions was going on apace. The strength, by the middle of June, had increased to 19 officers and 499 other ranks; there were rumours of the issue of full-dress uniform, and it was really surprising how loyal to themselves the Regiment had become. Then one day there came a bolt from the blue, just at the time when York and the Bays seemed to have become inseparable.

'"The Regiment will embark at Liverpool for Palestine on the 24th June 1919."

'"Oh, but we've only been here three months!"

'"I thought we were here for years."

'"Where are we going to?"

'"The Regiment will embark—"

'There was nothing more, and nothing to be gained by saying more. Again the old wearisome packing and handing to store, issuing and drawing from store and its endless etceteras, but with a new spirit – the same old spirit of sang-froid characteristic of the Bays.

'"Where are we going to, exactly?"

'"Oh, the Colonel doesn't know yet; we'll find out in time, my son."

'Practically the whole of the Northern Command turned out to watch the entraining of the Bays. The people of York were frantic, and some of the citizens even went the length of writing to the War Office. However, the band of the East Yorkshire Regiment played out the train to the strains of "Auld Lang Syne," and speculation became rife as to the ultimate destination.

'The 16th Lancers joined the Regiment on board the transport *Oxfordshire* – a good-looking and well-found ship of the Bibby Line. The Embarkation Officer at Liverpool thanked Colonel Ing for the precise manner with which they embarked, their credit being all the greater owing to the fact that the majority were Bays of a few weeks' standing

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only. It is unnecessary to dwell at great length on the voyage to that grimy gateway of the East, Port Said, which was reached on the morning of July 6. Needless to say, both units made it a happy event, and joined in creating amusement. Since a good many of the veteran Bays had endured a recent separation from their families throughout the period of the war, the act of leaving them behind again so soon was bitterly felt. Both the 16th Lancers and the Bays had the whole of their regimental baggage with them, the silver from the messes, the sporting trophies and sports gear, all the band instruments and ceremonial equipage, and their respective standards.

'The idea of settling down to peace-time soldiering was still strong in the Bays, and rumours were afloat regarding the issue of white helmets and the pre-war uniform on their arrival at the still-unknown destination. Even that mush-room city – the largest combined base-depot the world has ever seen – El Kantara – did not dispel the vision of plumes and jack-boots. El Kantara was a bustling centre of orderly confusion then, troops from all parts of the world arriving and departing to every other part of the world.

'General Sir E. Allenby inspected the Regiment on the 16th July, when all ranks were recovering from the effect of several inoculations. After the parade, the General addressed the officers and informed them of the task ahead, and it was evident then, just as events since have proved it to be so, that the security of the Middle East depended to a very great extent on the conduct of the Bays.

'The Remount Depot at El Kantara contained at that time some 50,000 horses. It is interesting to note that an old Farrier Regimental Quartermaster-Sergeant of the Bays was a Remount Officer there, and he was able to help the Regiment considerably. Captain C. Preston was well-known to many of the older hands.

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'S.S.M.R.R. Roper would undoubtedly have been happy to have taken the whole Remount Depot, when in due course the Regiment embarked for Beirut on two small steamers, this time as a mounted unit. Here, despite the picturesque harbour in which they disembarked, the truth began to dawn upon the majority – that there was no peace-time or even reasonably easy time ahead for the Bays. The first difficulty was experienced when those whose experience of long-rein driving was confined to play when they were at school were given a general service waggon, and four or perhaps six mules! The said mules were the hardest cases that ever left Argentina, and by dint of four years' active service on the desert, knew more ways of dodging, scrounging and foraging than the oldest veteran in Chelsea Royal Hospital.

'The Regiment began to realise that they were on a war-footing once more. Trek-work now began, and, on the 28th July, the march up-country commenced through a mountainous and picturesque region, through which invading armies have marched from time immemorable. The names of Mount Aley, Ain Sefar, Hostotora or Rayak, are not familiar with the average reader. To those who served with the Bays at that time, they bring back memories of the mud-cities and minarets of the Middle East, which, however charming they may appear on picture-postcards, are rather the reverse actually. The people of Syria were in a bad mood at that time, which is easily understood, as they had had perforce to entertain the Turks and the British in their turn, and to provide an amphitheatre for the war in those parts without option or right of redress. The country was roved by bands of Bedouins, who had been reared from childhood to thieve, and the whole earth seemed to be alive with snakes and serpents, scorpions and centipedes, and last, but not least, the most pernicious and

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virile bugs that ever settled down in the seam of one's shirt.

'At Rayak, signs were yet visible of the hurried retreat of the Turkish armies before Allenby's victorious cavalry. This was the terminus of the famous Bagdad railway, and seemed to be governed by a single Australian officer, who was R.T.O., G.C.-in-C. and Military Governor combined. He was of immense assistance in getting the horses aboard the train, bound for the ultimate destination, which by now had leaked out. The railway skirts the Mountains of Lebanon, and on the 3rd August, the Regiment was met at Aleppo by Captain J. Kingstone, M.C., and Lieut.-Quartermaster Smith, who had gone on before in order to arrange accommodation.

'This had been secured in the old doorless and windowless Turkish barracks on a hill just without the town – fortunately for the Bays, owing to the smell. Some tentage had thoughtfully been brought from El Kantara, the use of which helped to make matters somewhat better.

'The 16th Lancers had detrained at Homs, *en route* from Rayak.

'By the time an officers' mess, a sergeants' mess, and a canteen were in running order at Aleppo, the Bays had settled down to make the most of the bogy their peace-time station had proved to be, despite the heat, the sand and the sand-flies, and the exceptional amount of work, owing to the fact that a large number were always down with sand-fly fever. They were brigaded with two Indian cavalry units, the whole comprising the 14th Cavalry Brigade.

'The nature of the ground prevented sport of any great extent, although occasional games of hockey and cricket were indulged in. The officers of the Regiment, adapting themselves to circumstances, organised race-meetings on an

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improvised race-course. Soon after réveillé, the waggons, drawn by six mules, left for the ration-dump and wound their way down the hill in a cloud of yellow dust. By about midday, the Colonel's orderly might see a solitary horseman leading a small sandstorm across the plain below, and would remark to the orderly-room clerk, "Here's the quarter-bloke; we'll get some dinner anyway." The bad communications rendered the art of "supplies" difficult; the railway was in a sad state of disrepair, and great credit is due to those upon whom fell the administrative responsibility that the Bays had always a sufficiency of necessities.

'The ill-health of the Regiment told severely on those who were fit, especially since the water-troughs were over 2 miles from the lines. It was no unusual sight to see senior officers, in their vests, grooming four or five horses each during a morning, rather than that the men should be more imposed upon, or the horses neglected. Even so, strategical and tactical exercises were carried out, and the Regiment trekked on one occasion to Muselme on to Jezelmudick, and were for a few days on the borders of Asia Minor. It was now well in October, and the rainy season commenced in no half-hearted manner, just when the Bays were engaged upon these operations which had the double purpose of maintaining security by show of force. That this was a necessary precaution is evident from the trouble the French have experienced in those regions since.

'The term in Syria was now approaching an end, and the French having gained possession (the Bays considered them quite welcome), the British Military Governor of Aleppo handed over. On the 12th November 1919, the Regiment began its memorable march through 500 miles of mountain, plain and desert country to Jaffa. A significant fact is that the strength of the Regiment was now 18 officers and 322 other ranks. Many other ranks, of course, had

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been detached for service as military mounted police and other divisional duties.

'The first week or so of the march was made interesting by the glorious weather, and Captain H. Misa, in temporary command, had every reason to be optimistic. The Brigade was now designated the 12th Cavalry Brigade of the 4th Cavalry Division. Whoever remembers the mud villages of Seraiken, Habre, Raar Baalbec and Baalbec, will also remember their frozen hands and feet and soaked bodies. Whoever remembers Khan Shakow, will also remember the officer who dared to undress before getting into his flea-bag, and awoke at 4 a.m. to find his entire kit missing, through the efforts of friend Bedouin Arab! And who among the Bays who were, will ever forget the task of lifting pack-saddles from the mud to the backs of their mounts, on two biscuits and a billie of tea?

'Right the way down, *via* Hounair, Homs, Rayak, Shtora, Sidon, Tyre, Acre and Haifa, the rain continued to pour daily and nightly almost without ceasing, and the 12th Cavalry Brigade, with the Bays at their head, plodded on through a seemingly endless land of mud and swollen wadies. At Beirut, the Regiment encamped on the sea-shore, where numbers of horses that had broken down under the terrific strain were destroyed. The same thing occurred at Tyre on the seashore there. However, and for all the bad conditions, the Bays were still the Bays. There was a nice cosy, comfortable camp awaiting at Sarona, so that once aboard the train at Haifa, all ranks felt that their troubles were nearing an end. At Ludd the march was again taken up, to complete the 20 miles to where, amid the orange groves at Jaffa, a camp was awaiting them. It was still raining.

'Unlucky day, the 13th December. The Bays arrived at Sarona at dusk on that day, to find that their cosy camp

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consisted of one wretched marquee standing on the side of a slope under the pouring rain.

'"Halt, dismount and set up head-lines!"

'The utter wretchedness of the scene was sufficient to daunt the toughest veteran; nevertheless, with the will that finds a way, the Rustybuckles (whose buckles were really rusty by this time) made the best of things and faced their difficulties. Within a week tents were wangled and cook-houses fangled, horse-lines rigged and a camp set up. Christmas 1919 saw them more or less settled down beneath an eternal shower-bath in a land of slime and mud, wherefore the festive celebrations were not.

'Soon after Christmas, Major Heydeman, M.C., who had gone to England with the express purpose in view shortly before, returned with badly needed reinforcements. The hundred other ranks he brought instilled new life, and, let it be said that, despite the appalling conditions under which they joined the Regiment, they became Bays with their hearts and souls within a month. Things from now on became a little easier. B Battery, R.H.A., departed for Sunny Egypt in the usual rain and mud, one morning in March, and the regimental band turned out to play them away. The 16th Lancers departed as soon as the fine weather relieved us of the rain, and consequently men who could be ill-spared were sent on various divisional duties hitherto shared with the Lancers.

'Another surprise was in store. In July the order was announced that the married families were arriving from England, and would be accommodated in marquees near the orange groves. The men had, perhaps, got as accustomed to the jackals who howled around the tent at night, and the crawling things which always turned up in one's boots and blankets, as it was possible to do. Probably those of the wives and children who experienced the summer of

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1920 in Sarona, have vivid recollections of their sleepless nights there. It is said that on the only night on which one good lady could get to sleep, the whole portable contents of their marquee was stolen by the thieves.'

One event of 1920 not dealt with in the foregoing narrative deserves to be chronicled in some detail. While the Regiment was stationed at Sarona in August, it was ordered to provide an escort squadron to accompany Sir Herbert Samuel, the High Commissioner for Palestine, on a visit to the city of Es Salt in Transjordania.

The Squadron was a composite one of 64 other ranks, under the command of Captain C. P. C. Macnaughton, together with Lieutenants A. H. Barclay and O. V. Holmes, and S.S.M. R. D. Elliott, M.M., as Squadron Sergeant-Major.

The Squadron marched by easy stages across the Maritime Plain and through the mountains up to Jerusalem, and went into camp on the outskirts of that city.

On arrival it was found that the necessary arrangements for the High Commissioner's visit had not yet been completed, with the result that the Squadron had to remain in camp at Jerusalem for a fortnight, thereby affording ample opportunity for the men to view the historical and religious associations in which Jerusalem, Bethlehem and the neighbourhood abound – an opportunity of which full advantage was taken by all ranks.

At length, arrangements being completed, the escort squadron marched *via* Jericho, and crossed the river Jordan at Gorrannieh Bridge, and from there escorted the High Commissioner by rough roads and precipitous mountain-tracks to Es Salt.

Throughout the journey the tracks were extremely bad and difficult to find, and the local population, though not actively hostile, were not perhaps altogether friendly.

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Accordingly, active service conditions, in the shape of advanced and rear-guards – flank-guards, owing to the nature of the country and the size of the force, were impracticable – and outposts at night were adopted.

The advance, however, was without serious incident, except that the horse of Trooper Le Hegaret of B Squadron, who was leading a Hotchkiss-gun pack-mule, slipped and fell over the khud. Trooper Le Hegaret was dragged back to safety by the pack-mule, of which he had not let go, and who, resolutely refusing to be pulled into the bottomless abyss, stuck in his toes most valiantly, and undoubtedly rescued Trooper Le Hegaret from an untimely end.

On approaching Es Salt, all ranks had to be warned not to mistake a typical Arab welcome – galloping horses, rifle and revolver shots, etc. – for signs of hostility, all of which took place, fortunately without incident; while somewhat bewildered troopers of the Bays looked on, and wondered 'what was a-comin' of next!'

Es Salt – a city on a hillside – is wonderfully picturesque, set in a frame of vineyards and olive groves.

A colossal banquet in Arab style was given in honour of the visitors, and it is asserted that in the course of it both the junior officers of the Squadron ate far more than was good for them, in what was no doubt a praiseworthy attempt to do justice to Arab hospitality.

A gathering of Arab, Desert Arab and Circassian chiefs for many leagues round was held in the local town hall, to meet the High Commissioner, who was escorted by twelve of the most stalwart Bays, dismounted, who had to use all their strength to keep the mob in check.

Next morning, the High Commissioner and escort left Es Salt, escorted by large numbers of chiefs, and their followers firing volley after volley into the air.

On arrival at the Jordan, the High Commissioner left for

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Jerusalem by car, while the Squadron marched back by easy stages to Sarona, arriving there with horses looking big and well, in clean khaki drill, and with every buckle and piece of metal in burnish, having been away for exactly one month.

The Regiment later received a most flattering letter from the High Commissioner, thanking them for the service done to him by the Regiment, and for the excellent way in which it was carried out.

Only those who are familiar with the history of all that happened in Syria and Palestine in the years 1919–20 can realise the importance of the task of the Queen's Bays during this period. That the Regiment proved equal to it was due to the able command of Colonel G. H. Ing, C.M.G., D.S.O., as much as to anybody. Major Stone, too, had been an invaluable asset to the Regiment, owing to his great experiences in South Africa under somewhat similar conditions. Another of whom mention must be made is Captain E. Fanshawe, who was then Adjutant, and whose solicitation for the welfare of his men is appreciated by all who paraded under him or who knew him.

A word must be said, too, about – last but by no means least – that much-abused person, the quartermaster – the man to whom the squadron leaders fly if they are short of forage, the squadron quartermaster-sergeant if they are short of bread and butter, the sergeants if they have no beer, the men if they have no cigarettes in the canteen, and the orderly-officer if he considers the dinners not quite like they should be. Lieut.-Quartermaster Smith, throughout the constant moving about from place to place, the difficult conditions under which supplies of food and forage were obtained, proved himself a quartermaster worthy of the Bays, and that – or so the Bays feel – is the finest compliment it is possible to pay a soldier. By reason of his efforts in

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supplying the requirements of the stomachs on which men and horses marched, the Bays marched in the great trek of progress to conquest in honour in both peace and war.

On November 7, 1920, the Regiment entrained at Jaffa for Port Suez to await embarkation for India. They landed at Bombay in December and proceeded to Bangalore, commanded by Lieut.-Colonel C. S. Rome, C.M.G., D.S.O. At Cornwallis Barracks, Bangalore, the Bays' strength in April 1921 was 29 officers, 562 other ranks and 116 horses. A pleasing incident was the receipt of a diploma from the French Government (March 10, 1921) for presentation to Lieutenant and Quartermaster G. F. Smith, D.C.M., for an act of gallantry at Marles-les-Mines on May 17, 1917.

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In the summer of 1921, while stationed at Bangalore, the Bays supplied a detachment for service in the suppression of the Moplah rising in Malabar.

For centuries before the first European adventurers arrived in India, the trade of the Indian Ocean was almost completely in the hands of the Arabs, and there were regular trade routes from Calicut on the Malabar coast to the Red Sea and the ports of East Africa. The Moplahs are the descendants of the Arabs, who, during this long and prosperous period, settled along the Malabar coast and the hill country of the Ghats and Nilgiris. They are now estimated to number over 700,000, spread over a wide region, mingled in some places with the Hindu population, and in others forming complete village communities of their own. They have kept their marked national character, and are strongly attached to their traditional customs and their Moslem religion.

From time to time in the Moplah districts of Malabar

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there have been (as elsewhere in India) local troubles between Moslem and Hindu. Besides this, there were occasional outbreaks against the agents of successive European Governments – Portuguese, Dutch and British. But the Moplahs had been living a peaceful life for many years before the agitation that developed in India in the latter period of the Great War.

These Arab Moslems had no interest in the non-co-operation movement and the Hindu claims for self-government; but disloyal agents brought them exaggerated accounts of the political troubles of other parts of India, and led them to imagine that the whole country was seething with disaffection. They were told wild stories of defeats of our armies in Europe and Western Asia, and were assured that all the best groups of the Indian garrisons had been sent away for war service elsewhere, and that the British Raj was in deadly peril. The smouldering agitation went on after the war. Here and there local grievances against officials and European planters added to it, and a further factor of trouble was the arrival in their villages of native officers and men of a disbanded regiment, the Moplah Light Infantry, who brought them stories of anti-British movements elsewhere in India, and related their own grievances as to the terms on which they were paid off. Some of these native soldiers were among the leaders of the widespread disturbances that began in the summer of 1921.

The movement began with mere local rioting. It was badly organised and never extended to the whole Moplah population. But it had all the danger of an outbreak of fire amid highly inflammable material. It developed into a guerilla warfare, and was most serious in the difficult hill country that begins close to the narrow belt of the coast region. This is the district of hills and valleys rising to the

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mountain ridges, with roads that were mostly mere cart-tracks, scattered plantations and villages with patches of tilled ground on the midst of the jungle. There was no large garrison anywhere in the country, but the native police posts in the larger villages had long been sufficient supports for law and order.

The rising blazed up suddenly in the hinterland of Calicut. Armed parties of Moplahs were on the move, disarming the small police courts of the villages, and thus adding a number of carbines and rifles to their original miscellaneous equipment of old swords and spears, axes, muskets, sporting guns and a few elephant rifles. They raided the plantation, tore up the railway-track at several points and broke down bridges on the line and the roads. At Tirur, Mr. Richardson, a British police officer, tried to persuade a large Moplah gathering to disperse. The parley ended in a riot in which he was killed. The Moplahs then made a dash for Calicut, but the town was saved by its little garrison, a company of the Leinster Regiment.

On the first warning of disturbance in Malabar, a small force, officially known as the 'First Movable Column,' had been organised at Bangalore, and was held in readiness to move at brief notice. It was commanded by Colonel Radcliffe of the 2nd Dorsets, and was made up of his battalion, a detachment of the Queen's Bays, two sections Royal Field Artillery, a Company of Madras Pioneers, a Company of native Sappers and Miners, a Field Ambulance and the native cart transport of the 30th Draft Pony Corps.

The detachment of the Bays, under the command of Major Stone, was made up of one troop from A Squadron, and three sabre troops and the Hotchkiss-gun troop from B Squadron.

On August 19, the call came for the column to move to the disturbed district. At 10 p.m. that evening the Bays'

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detachment marched from barracks to the Bangalore Cantonment Station, where the night was spent. It was not till 11 a.m. next day that their troop-train started. They were nearly twenty-four hours on the way, when, at 10 a.m. on the 21st, the train, now on the Malabar branch-line to Calicut, was stopped at Shoranur Station, and all the troops were ordered to detrain there.

The line had been cut and a considerable length of the track pulled up by the Moplahs a few miles to the westward. While it was being repaired, it was decided to make Shoranur the railway base of the column. A camp was formed there, and the immediate duties of the Bays were first a reconnaissance of the neighbouring roads and the protection of the line, and then escorting convoys to advanced posts, and bringing in prisoners rounded up in the district. The troop of A Squadron was sent on to Calicut for much the same duties in that quarter.

On the 28th, there seemed to be some prospect of a fight when a troop of the Bays accompanied a force made up of part of the Dorset Battalion and the native Sappers and Miners, escorting a convoy on a short march into the hills, with the object of relieving the village of Malappuram, reported to be short of supplies and menaced by a large Moplah force. But the enemy withdrew on the approach of the column, and the place was organised as an advanced base.

While the Bays were patrolling and escorting cart convoys, parties of rebels were often sighted on the hills right and left of the roads. But they never attacked, and invariably disappeared into the jungle on the first sign of a move against them. More than once Moplah villages were found deserted and on fire, the people having just taken to the bush. Recent presence of the enemy's parties was often shown by the march being delayed by trees felled or trenches

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cut across the roads. Our patrols were always accompanied by native police interpreters, and numbers of prisoners and suspects were rounded up and brought in. Escorts and patrols were trying duties, for it was the Monsoon season, and there were frequent downpours of rain, followed by spells of sunshine that meant some hours of steaming hot atmosphere.

The Bays were never in action. On one occasion they arrived just in time to give welcome help to a company of the Dorsets that were hard pressed by a large body of Moplahs. The mere sight of the approaching cavalry led to the prompt retreat of the rebels. British cavalry had not been seen in that part of India for many years, and the presence of this small mounted force evidently exerted a deterrent influence on the enemy. But most of the district, and especially the wide tracks of hill and jungle, were impracticable for mounted troops. This was soon realised, and in September the Bays were withdrawn and returned to Bangalore.

Three N.C.O.'s who had been doing useful work with the convoys of carts and pack-mules were left in the district, and did not rejoin the Regiment until early in 1920, when the last embers of the revolt had been trampled out. One of the three, Corporal Archdale, was mentioned in dispatches for good service done one day when a convoy, with its escort, halted beside a river, and was suddenly and heavily fired upon from the bush on the opposite bank. There was the beginning of a panic stampede among the native convoy drivers, but Archdale rallied them, kept them together, and moved them from ground on which they were masking the fire of the infantry escort and its Maxim-gun. When these came into action the Moplahs made a very hasty retreat.

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The Regiment furnished the Royal escort for the Prince

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of Wales' visit to Bangalore on January 18, 1922, when His Royal Highness presented the Bays with his signed photograph, and Queen Mary sent them a portrait of herself.

On July 17, the whole Regiment attended a Memorial Service at Holy Trinity Church, Bangalore, for Captain K. F. Sackville-West, who had served with the Regiment throughout the Great War. On the 28th, Lieut.-General Sir Hew Dalrymple Fanshawe, K.C.M.G., was gazetted Colonel of the Regiment, *vice* General Sir William Seymour, K.C.B., deceased.

A proposal having been made that the Queen's Bays should join the Old Comrades' Association, every man in the Regiment (viz. 678) responded. In the realm of sport, the Headquarters Squadron won the 'Old Contemptibles' Football Cup for 1921, and B Team won the permanent shield in commemoration of the Duke of Connaught's visit. The remainder of 1922 was mainly spent in training, and the whole Regiment was instructed in the use of the bayonet. The Bays earned the congratulations of General Lord Rawlinson, Commander-in-Chief in India, for their skill in the Musical Ride of H. Madras District Assault-at-Arms, as also of those of F.M. (then General) Sir Claude Jacob, in presenting them with many trophies and medals for fine shooting in the Army Rifle Association.

On February 10, 1924, the Bays left Bangalore for Sialkot, there to relieve the 3/6th Dragoon Guards. Their strength at that time was: 24 officers, 561 other ranks, 561 animals, 6 Vickers guns, and 6 Hotchkiss guns. Training proceeded as usual, while they enjoyed some notable successes at polo. Seven officers and 110 other ranks were awarded the India General Service Medal, with the clasp, 'Malabar,' for the operations in that area.

An Army Order notified that the Queen's Bays were to

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receive the following battle honours for the Great War: Mons; Le Cateau; Retreat from Mons; Marne, 1914; Aisne, 1914; Messines, 1914; Armentières, 1914; Ypres, 1914–5; Frezenberg; Bellewaade; Somme, 1916–8; Flers-Courcellete; Arras, 1917; Scarpe, 1917; Cambrai, 1917–8; St. Quentin; Bapaume, 1918; Rosièrs; Amiens; Hindenburg Line; St. Quentin Canal; Beaurevoir; Pursuit to Mons; France and Flanders, 1914–8.

On March 31, 1925, the Regiment attended a Memorial Service for H.E. Lord Rawlinson, who had died at Delhi, and on April 11 a ceremonial parade for the assumption of the Viceroyalty of India by Lord Lytton. On May 12, the first meeting took place at Sialkot of a Regimental Committee formed to arrange for a suitable memorial to members of the Queen's Bays who fell in the Great War.

The Regiment, commanded by Lieut.-Colonel R. H. Osborne, D.S.O., M.C. (who succeeded Colonel Rome in September 1924), remained at Sialkot until December 27, 1926, when it went to Bombay *en route* for England. The following telegram was received from F.M. Sir W. R. Birdwood, Commander-in-Chief in India: 'I am really sorry to be losing the Queen's Bays from my command. I well know what excellent service the Regiment has done out here, and in what a high state of efficiency it now is. I much regret not being able personally to see you again before leaving, and I now wish to convey best of good wishes to all ranks for a happy and prosperous time on return to England, where I hope I may again see the Regiment.'

The Bays embarked at Bombay in the *City of Marseilles* on January 1, 1927, to the number of 21 officers, 10 warrant-officers, 35 sergeants, 26 corporals and 317 troopers. They remained at Colchester Barracks, under command of Lieut.-Colonel Osborne, from April 1, 1927 to March 31, 1928. H.M. the King was pleased to approve of the 7th

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Australian Light Horse becoming allied to the Queen's Bays.

Lieut.-Colonel C. A. Heydeman, M.C., succeeded Colonel Osborne in command of the Regiment, and a move was made to Tidworth Barracks. From that headquarters the following notification was issued in March 1929: 'The Commanding Officer announced with the deepest regret the death of Captain Roland Todd Barnard, M.C., The Queen's Bays, at the Military Hospital, Tidworth, at 11.50 p.m. on the 20th March, 1929.'

Colonel Fanshawe received the honour of K.C.B. in the Birthday Honours List of 1926, and was promoted General.

It must be mentioned that the Queen's Bays War Fund did a splendid work. It received in donations nearly £3000, and was able to effect great good for prisoners of war and others. Its Committee included Mrs. A. C. Seymour (President), Mrs. E. Wilberforce, Mrs. E. L. Cobham, Mrs. L. Browning and Mrs. D. Harman.

The splendid Regimental War Memorial was unveiled by Lieut.-General Sir Hugh Fanshawe on August 18, 1927, at Colchester, in a most impressive ceremonial, with the Regiment drawn up in hollow square, dismounted. The Senior Chaplain to the Forces conducted the ceremony, and the prayers were recited by the Rev. J. W. Wallace Smyth, C.F.

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So ends our record of the Queen's Bays. It tells of nearly two and a half centuries of good service since the first squadrons of Dragoon Guards were formed in the days of the Stuart Restoration. We have followed the fortunes of the Regiment in peace and on active service during the long period before the Great War, and told in fuller detail the story of its share in that tremendous conflict. The story ends, it must be confessed, with something of an anti-

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climax, as we note the chief happenings of the few years of peace since its close – the relatively unimportant happenings of a time of relatively small things. But this was inevitable if the record was to be made complete.

The experiences of the four years of active service on the Western Front revealed in a striking manner the difficulties under which cavalry were employed in the presence of modern military developments, and under the exceptional conditions of prolonged entrenched warfare. Not a few critics of these experiences have somewhat rashly ventured on the conclusion that the mounted arm has ceased to be of any serious value in the warfare of to-day. Hasty conclusions as to the effects of changing conditions, new armaments, and consequent tactical developments have been current after many wars, but the serious student of military history may at least suspend his judgment on such theories and forecasts, as he remembers how wide of the mark they have often been in the past.

During the Great War, two causes affected in popular and even in professional estimation the current opinion as to the traditional prestige of the mounted arm. First of all, for year after year, the operations on the Western Front were practically siege warfare on a gigantic scale, and cavalry units were used almost entirely as dismounted combatants in the trenches. Then, in the later stages of the conflict, there came a marvellous revival of the war-chariot, which, though once a formidable feature of the battle-line, had disappeared from it during nigh on two thousand years on the battlefields of Asia and Europe. It reappeared in the new forms of the 'tank' and other armoured fighting vehicles, and it was soon suggested that in the armies of the immediate future these modern war-chariots would replace cavalry and horse artillery. The new theory went still further, and its enthusiasts predicted that in coming wars even

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whole divisions of infantry would no longer manœuvre by toilsome route marches, but would be rushed into the fight in specially adapted forms of the omnibus and the charabanc of the holiday-makers. So the 'mechanisation' of armies (a new word for a new departure) has become the fashion of the time.

This is not the place for even an attempt to discuss the problems of 'mechanisation.' We may be content to say no more than that extreme views on the subject must be misleading, and the fact will always remain that in war the man counts for more than the machine. So the cavalry soldier will still have his place, even while the armed car supplies a useful auxiliary, and in some conditions may prove a rival, to the armed horseman.

Both cavalry regiments and squadrons of tanks and light cars are expensive units to equip and maintain, so, with the reduction of the military chapter in national budgets and the new popularity of 'mechanisation,' there has come a tendency to reduce the cavalry arm and use the economies thus effected on providing more and more tanks and cars. One result of this is that several distinguished regiments of our British cavalry have been reduced to mere squadrons in newly reorganised units. The Queen's Bays have been fortunate in being spared this fate, and the old Regiment survives as an independent unit, with only a few cross-country vehicles added to it as an auxiliary equipment.

In recent times, both before and after the Great War, new elements have been added to its organisation – machine-gun squadrons, light automatic rifles, and, latest of all, the light cars; but the mounted dragoon is still the dominant element in the Regiment. One may add as an illustration of the fact that essential features in a military organisation may survive the changes of centuries, that a tactical development, begun in the years before the Great War, has resulted

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in a striking resemblance between the Queen's Bays under George V. and the first dragoons recruited and trained when the Regiment was formed under Charles II.

These first dragoons in the British service were cavaliers armed with a short musket, and trained to fight on foot as well as for mounted duties. Similarly the cavalry soldier of to-day is armed with a rifle and trained for the dismounted fire fight. But this has not superseded the full training of what remain, in the present as in the past, the ideal and special duties of cavalry – exploration of the field of operations in front of advancing columns or on the outpost line, the vigilant reconnaissance of hostile movements, the rapid raid or the dash to reinforce a menaced point, and finally, when opportunity offers, the mounted charge and the swift pursuit. For these last the occasions may be rare under modern conditions, but when they present themselves they are golden opportunities, in which success means far-reaching results.

So it would be a mistake to imagine that the days of cavalry action are at an end, and the record of the Regiment need not be regarded as a closed chapter in our military history. We all hope for long, lasting peace, and those who most desire it are men who bore themselves well in recent years of war. But war has not yet been banished for ever from the earth, and we may indeed doubt if everlasting peace can ever be secured in our imperfect world. So the heroic record of the Regiment is no mere story of a vanished time. It enshrines a tradition that may well inspire devoted fulfilment of duty in days of peace, together with eagerness, if the call to action should come once more, to be worthy of an illustrious past, and to be prepared to fight again 'as men fought in the brave days of old.'

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APPENDICES

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APPENDIX I

THE following is taken from the *Journal of the Society of Army Historical Research*, No. 14, vol. iii., October 1924:

SECOND (OR QUEEN'S) REGIMENT OF DRAGOON GUARDS, FROM ROYAL WARRANT, DATED 1ST JULY 1751

Sergeants, Corporals and Private men.	Facings and Lapels. – Buff colour with half-lapels. Button-holes, and how the buttons are set on. – Yellow. Three and three. Waistcoats and Breeches. – Buff colour. Hat-lace. – Gold.
Drummers, Trumpeters and Hautbois.	Colour facings and linings of the coats. – Red with blue. Waistcoats and Breeches. – Blue. (Buff colour in 1768.) Royal lace, yellow and blue.
Housings and Holster-caps.	Buff colour with Royal lace. Badge. – Queen's cypher with the Garter.
Standards and Guidons.	The second and third Standard or Guidon. – Buff. Embroidery and fringe on the three Standards. – Gold. Badge on the second and third. – Queen's cypher within the Garter.

INSPECTION RETURNS

1753, May. – Drums received in 1749–50. Officers' uniforms new and according to regulation. Horse furniture old, but good. Men have white gaiters.

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Buff accoutrements, coloured yellow. Horses very fine, have great spirit; all bays except the Drums, who are mounted on greys. Uniform. – Red lapelled, faced and lined with buff; buff waistcoats; red breeches; yellow buttons and holes; gold-laced hats.

1754, 4 November. – Twelve Drummers' swords received in 1750; standards, 1754; uniform as above, but 'shag breeches.'

1759, 26 June. – Drummers and Farriers on greys. Drums of brass, embossed, not painted, being made before the regulation.

16 August. – Light troop had brass caps.

1768, 3 June. – Officers' uniform embroidered with gold; arms and furniture, handsome. Trumpeters finely mounted. 52 longtails.

1769, 4 May. – Officers' uniforms very good, without any new alterations; buff facings; buff waistcoats and breeches; gold embroidery; epaulette; laced hats. Horses: bay of a large size.

1770, 21 May. – Two standards, 1764. Housings completed, 1763.

1775, 27 May. – Housings, 1775. Caps of the furniture differ from the other regiments, being made single, not to turn up.

1776, 31 May. – Officers, gold-embroidered button-holes. Trumpeters and Farriers, grey horses. Horse furniture, new; the caps like those of the Horse Guards, not to turn up; no bosses. Cloaks according to regulation, buff lining. Long and short gaiters.

1777, 16 May. – The Sergeants' horses of this Regiment cost £3, 3s. 0d. more than any of the other Dragoon regiments. Officers, gold-embroidered

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button-holes. Men's coats too long-waisted, buff lining. Trumpeters and Farriers, grey. Bits without bosses.

1784, 10 May. – Two standards good. New hats and horse furniture expected immediately.

1785, 20 May. – Two standards bad. Appeared in old horse furniture, new not being delivered. Clothing, new; facings changed from buff to black.

1790, 1 June. – Housings, 1786. (Trumpeters evidently had special bits.) Boots, a great deal too short: they were much below the knee.

1801, 2 May. – Arms and horse furniture in good condition. Thirteen men dressed in the uniform of Trumpeters.

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APPENDIX II

AN ACCOUNT OF EXPERIENCES BEHIND THE GERMAN LINES IN 1914.

By Captain C. H. Bushell, Queen's Bays.

Towards evening on August 26, 1914, whilst acting as galloper to Brigadier-General Briggs, Officer Commanding the 1st Cavalry Brigade, I became cut off from the British troops at Escaufort, near Le Cateau, which had retired in a southerly direction.

I found myself surrounded, and had to let my horse go, and hide in a drain at the bottom of a railway embankment just outside the village of Honnechy.

Masses of German troops were continually coming into the village and passing through, and large numbers bivouacked around the place where I was hiding.

I was compelled to remain where I was for three days and nights, the whole time being without food or drink.

Towards evening on the third day, as things were quieter, I crept out of my hiding-place and went towards the village.

Very much exhausted through lack of food, I managed to reach a cottage on the road, and was fortunately able to get a little food.

As I was eating this food, a peasant came to warn me that more German troops were coming into the village, so I rushed off to an adjoining orchard and hid in a double hedge.

I remained in this hiding-place that night and the following day until midnight, and had food given to me by a cottager.

I was considering what to do, when one of the inhabitants

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came and told me that there were some British soldiers hiding in a plantation at the far end of the village.

On receipt of this news, I deemed it my duty to go to these men to look after them, so, with the help of two of the inhabitants and some borrowed civilian clothes which I put on over my uniform, I left my hiding-place just after midnight. I was escorted by these two men, and made a circuit of the village across some fields to this plantation, which we reached safely.

I found there Sergeant Taylor and ten men of the 11th Hussars, who were in rather a sorry plight, and took charge of them.

The Mayor of Honnechy was very kind and helpful in getting us food, but we were in a very difficult position, so I was desirous of leaving at the earliest possible moment, my object being to try and reach Lille.

We were unable to get away, however, as soon as I should have liked, owing to the large number of the enemy about, so had to remain in our hiding-place for six days.

During the night of September 6, I left with these eleven men, and marched throughout the night, and reached Englefontaine at daybreak the following day.

We were hidden in a house at the edge of the Forêt de Mormal for two days, and in the meantime civilians went out in different directions to find out for me which would be the best way to go. I was assured on all hands that Lille and all the surrounding district was in the hands of the Germans, and there appeared to be large numbers of troops everywhere.

It was, therefore, deemed the best course for us to shelter in the forest for the time being, until a way was found clear.

I therefore moved into the forest with my men and went into a disused charcoal-burner's hut not far from the edge of the forest, and near the village.

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I soon discovered that there were a large number of British troops in hiding in the neighbourhood, and numbers came and attached themselves to me, so that very soon I had over thirty men of different regiments with me.

The villagers were very good in bringing us food from the village, and I had splendid help from M. Taisne, the *garde de chasse*, who was of the very greatest assistance to me throughout our two and a half months' existence in the forest.

We lived in this hut, now about thirty-five of us, for about a month, with many alarms and exciting experiences, one of which was an attempt one night by myself and a Frenchman and two of my men to blow up a railway bridge on the line running from Maubeuge to Le Cateau along the eastern edge of the forest. The attempt was unsuccessful, owing to the guards, and we had a narrow escape.

I was joined about this time, too, by a French soldier who had been cut off at Charleroi, and he turned his hand to the cooking and was very helpful to us.

Early in October, I heard that the Germans were searching for us in the forest, and that notices had been put up in the villages offering rewards for our capture, and penalties for any one who should give us food.

I, therefore, deemed it advisable to move our quarters to another part of the forest, so one night we moved to another hut not far from the village of Hecq.

There we remained for about another month, and in the meantime made a large underground dug-out near Locquignol, in case we might have to change our quarters hurriedly.

This actually did happen, for on November 4, we were surprised by one of the large shooting-parties of German officers, who used frequently to come out from Bavai.

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We managed to get away, but had to leave the food we had behind, and made for our dug-out near Locquignol.

About six men were missing, but all turned up during the early morning.

As we were without any food whatsoever, four men volunteered to go back to our late hut to try and get it out after dark.

They were unsuccessful, however, as the hut was in the hands of the enemy, and my men were fired on from all directions, and it was a mystery how none of them was hit.

They all arrived back safely, and reported that the Germans were following us, this being confirmed later by my sentries, who reported numbers of the enemy in the vicinity.

Under the circumstances, I thought it inadvisable to remain where we were, so about midnight we evacuated the place, my object being to reach the extreme north of the forest.

I afterwards learnt that the Germans entered our hiding-place soon after we left, so that we did not leave a minute too soon.

During the month of October, Princess Marie de Croy, hearing that there were British troops in the forest, came down to see me to see what could be done.

She told me that if the worst came to the worst, and we were driven out of the forest, I was to go to her Château at Bellignies; and it was all owing to her wonderful help and kindness that I was eventually enabled to reach Holland and England once more.

In the meantime she asked Mlle Thuliez to try and see what could be done for us, and her splendid pluck and help were of the utmost assistance to us.

On leaving our dug-out about 11 p.m. on November 4, in the pouring rain, I made for the eastern edge of the forest,

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and eventually got out on to the main Bavai-Le Cateau road, but our difficulties were much increased by the extreme blackness of the night and the pouring rain.

Going along the main road in a northerly direction for some way, I then made a detour to the left through a village, and had to cross the railway-line, which was guarded.

To do this noiselessly, I ordered all the men to take off their boots, and we eventually crossed the railway successfully in our stockinged feet. I had to make this detour in order to avoid the railway bridge across the main road, which was strongly guarded.

I had great difficulty in finding my way back again towards the forest, owing to the inky blackness of the night, and we were further handicapped through one of the men who was suffering from a heart attack, which necessitated frequent halts.

However, I eventually reached the forest and made for the north end, and at about daybreak on November 1, we reached the northern end, near Obies.

Here I halted to decide what to do, as we were in rather a difficult position, having left our friends without being able to tell them where we were going, and at the same time we were without food. True, we had given the Germans the slip, but, having once seen us, they were not likely to let us remain for long.

I therefore decided to hide the men in some thick undergrowth, where they were to remain without moving, whilst I went out to try and find any inhabitants.

I eventually came across a girl, and persuaded her to take a note for me to Bellignies to Princess Marie, informing her of our position.

In the evening she and Captain Preston (who had escaped from Bavai Hospital and was at the Château) came down to see me; and it was arranged that I and my men

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should remain in hiding in the thick undergrowth without moving, so that no one should know that we were in the forest, and at the same time some food for us was to be provided each day by the Mayor of Obies, which was to be put in a certain spot in the forest after dark, so that I could send two men to fetch it.

As we were concealed in this manner, it was impossible for us to keep a look-out for the Germans, so that Princess Marie asked Mlle Thuliez to help us, which she did most efficiently, and used to come down each day to the forest.

We remained in this position for five or six days, but owing to the incessant rain and the few clothes we had, and being unable to move about, even to keep warm, it was very trying.

The last day we were there, Mlle Thuliez came to me in the afternoon and told me that a large number of Germans had arrived in the forest about a mile from where we were, and were searching the forest for us.

As we had come to the extreme limit of the forest, I decided that the best thing to do was for us to leave and go to Bellignies.

Accordingly that night, November 12, which was very wild and stormy, we set out, led by Mlle Thuliez, who knew the best way for us to take.

We went a large portion of the way across country and avoided, as far as possible, the main road and villages, and left the town of Bavai on our left.

The stormy night favoured us, as it covered our tracks and muffled any noise that we made, and at about 2.30 a.m. we arrived safely at the Château de Bellignies, without a soul knowing where we had gone or where we were.

This was lucky for us, because, so long as any one knew where we were, we were naturally talked about, and the Germans were almost certain to hear.

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The Princess was, of course, not expecting us, and the household had to be awakened, and it was arranged that the men should all go into a loft, where they made themselves very comfortable, whilst I went into the house.

The first thing I did was to have a boiling bath – the first I had had for three months, and which I always remember as being the most enjoyable I had ever had.

Captain Preston, who was senior in rank to me, now took over command of my men, and he decided that it would be impossible for them to remain where they were, owing to the impossibility of hiding and feeding so many (35). Also there were several sick, through the rough time we had had, and so he arranged for them to be taken into the Red Cross French Hospital at Bavai.

Therefore, on the night of November 15, Mlle Thuliez piloted them into the Hospital at Bavai, and they were handed over to the French medical authorities.

I was ignorant of these arrangements, and it was not until the next morning that I was told what had happened.

I was naturally very much upset to think that the splendid fellows who had stuck to me so well all this time had gone.

They, too, were naturally averse to doing it, but I think realised the impossible position we were in, and the impossibility of so large a number having any chance of getting through the lines or even into Holland.

We were much relieved, however, later to hear that the German Commandant had promised that they should be well treated.

That left in the Château only Princess Marie, Mrs. Parnell, Captain Preston and myself, and three or four servants, Prince Reginald de Croy being at that time over in England.

Therefore, no one except the household and three or four outside friends of Princess Marie knew that Captain

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Preston and myself were in the house, so that with luck and by taking precautions, it was fairly probable that the Germans would not find out that we were there.

Captain Preston and myself slept in a bedroom in the tower, the walls of which were very thick, in which was a circular staircase running to the top floor of the tower.

The top of the staircase had been bricked in, but the bottom was open, with a door leading to it from our room.

We decided that this would be the best place to hide, in case any Germans should come, so accordingly we made a wooden partition to fit in at the bottom of the stairs, on which were fixed shelves for boots and shoes, so that on opening the door, it appeared to be an ordinary cupboard.

This back was, of course, detachable, and could be kept in place from the stairs side when we were behind, and had quite a solid appearance.

Up the stairs we laid in a stock of food and water and rugs and candles, so that we could live there for some time – the only disadvantage being that it was very cold, especially during the winter-time, and very dark, the only light being through a very narrow hole in the thick wall.

Fortunately for us, we had only to use our hiding-place on three or four occasions when Germans came to the house, and then only for short periods.

All my uniform and equipment, etc., together with a considerable number of rifles and ammunition of the men, was buried in boxes in the grounds in different places, so that no trace should be left.

Both of us, of course, remained all day in the house, and all the windows facing the front were curtained or screened so that we might not be seen by any one from the outside.

Our only exercise was an hour's walk round the grounds after dark each evening, escorted by two dogs to give us

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warning, and in case of danger a lamp was lit and put in one of the windows as a signal for us to come in.

About a fortnight or three weeks after my arrival, Prince Reginald returned from England *via* Holland, and brought us longed-for news of the outside world.

He had also given information to the British War Office in London that we both were in hiding, so that our parents were able to be notified that we were alive – this being the first that had been heard of us since the previous August.

Whilst we were in the Château, things were more or less quiet, although we were all in a continuous state of uncertainty as to what might happen any moment.

Germans were billeted in the village shortly after our arrival and used, fairly frequently, to come to the house for one thing or another, when, of course, Captain Preston and myself had to disappear for a time.

On one occasion just before Christmas, three or four Germans came to ask for a Christmas tree, and permission was given them to take one. They therefore went to the garden and proceeded to dig up one immediately adjacent to the spot where a considerable number of rifles and ammunition was buried.

This caused considerable uneasiness on our part at the time, but fortunately they did not discover anything, and went away cheerfully with the tree.

Somehow or other, the German authorities became suspicious that the Prince and Princess had been instrumental in helping me and my men in the forest, and on several occasions officers came to question the Prince and Princess, and went through their private desks and drawers to try and find any incriminating papers, but fortunately without result.

They did not appear to be very satisfied, however, and this all caused us considerable anxiety, as no one knew how

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much they were aware of, or likely to find out, and apparently they appeared to know that there had been an officer with the men, and wished to discover where he was.

Little did they know how near I was at the moment!

Naturally, we were both anxious to try and get back to the British Army again as soon as possible, and there were two courses open – either to stay where we were for another two months or so, until the allied offensive should take place and the Germans driven back and we should be relieved, or that we should try and get back somehow ourselves.

The former seemed to be very uncertain, and was not considered, so the latter was decided on. Here again there were two ways – either to attempt to get through the lines, or to try and reach Holland *via* Belgium.

The former seemed to be too difficult, and in fact almost impossible owing to the continuous system of trenches which had been constructed from the sea to Switzerland, and the enormous difficulties we should experience when nearing the fighting-lines. It was, therefore, fixed that we should make the attempt to reach Holland.

This, of course, was no easy matter, as the enemy were in control everywhere, and no circulation was allowed without a permit from the Germans, and identity papers were essential; and all the railways, bridges, roads, frontiers and entrances to towns were picketed and patrolled so as to prevent unauthorised persons from moving about.

It was, therefore, going to be a difficult problem, and was not a thing which could be left to chance, for if we had been caught in civilian clothes, it is pretty certain that we should have had to pay the penalty.

It was obvious that we could not do this on our own, and would have to have some one with us to help us through.

The Prince and Princess, therefore, after great difficulties, managed to work a scheme whereby we should be

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passed on from one place to another and have some one with us.

It was eventually fixed up; and on the night of December 29, Captain Preston and myself, together with Mlle Thuliez, left Bellignies and made for the Belgian frontier, which we successfully crossed, and eventually reached the village of Audreginies where we passed the remainder of the night at the Comtesse de Belleville's.

We started off again early the next morning, and walked as far as Elouges, each of us taking a book with us to read if we should be in any public conveyance, so as to avoid speaking to any one on the way – Mlle Thuliez doing all the talking and the paying that might be necessary.

At Elouges we boarded a tram which took us to Dour, there being several German soldiers in the tram, as of course there were many German troops everywhere.

At Dour, we had to change trams and get into another one which took us to Mons. Unfortunately the tram was rather crowded, and I was unable to get a seat to sit down and read, but had to stand on the platform shoulder to shoulder with a German.

This caused me considerable uneasiness, being the first time I had come in contact with them on our journey, but later we became more used to it, as we naturally came across thousands on our way across.

We arrived safely at Mons at about 11 o'clock, and made our way to the Cathedral, where we were to meet Prince Reginald at midday, as he was coming out from Bellignies to give us our final instructions.

Several German soldiers were in there looking round, and punctually at twelve he arrived, and shortly afterwards we all made our way to a restaurant to get some lunch.

Here again the place was full of German officers, and I was filled with apprehension when one of them came in to

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wash his hands in the next basin to mine, and dried his hands on the same towel, but fortunately did not speak to me.

I only spoke a few words of French, so if at any time I had been spoken to, things might have been rather awkward.

We managed to get a table to ourselves, so all passed off well, and after lunch went out, and bade our farewells to Prince Reginald, who returned to Bellignies, whilst we made our way to the steam tram which was to take us to Brussels.

We managed to get seats together, fortunately, and read our books assiduously the whole way, so as to avoid speaking to any one, although I could see one lady sitting opposite us was very anxious to have a chat.

As far as we could foresee, the chief danger for us on this particular ride was going to be at Enghien, as the tram always had to stop there for half an hour to allow one coming in the opposite direction to pass, and usually German officers took the opportunity to come round to examine the *laissez-passer*. We, of course, had none, so our plan was to get out when they came round, and get in again in another part of the tram where they had already been examined, if possible.

The tram going in the opposite direction came in soon after our arrival, and all were examined on that tram; but very fortunately for us, they did not come round our tram for some reason or other, much to our relief, and we proceeded on our journey without further incident.

Brussels was reached in the evening after dark, and on alighting, at once took the tram to the Gare du Nord, from whence we proceeded on foot to an Ecclesiastical College near by, where we reported ourselves to M. L'Abbé de Longueville, who was to take charge of us from Brussels onwards.

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It had been arranged that M. de Longueville should take us on as soon as possible from Brussels to Holland, and he had arranged for us to go *via* Liège, as being the easiest way.

On seeing him, he informed us that difficulties had arisen with regard to our going by that route, so that his plans had to be changed, which would entail us staying in Brussels for several days.

He had his agents out to report on the feasibility of the routes, so he hoped the delay would not be for long.

It had been arranged that we should spend the night at the house of Count Mevuis, so after leaving M. L'Abbé we set off there with Mlle Thuliez.

On talking things over later with Count Mevuis, we all came to the conclusion that it would be rather unwise to stay the night at the house, as the Count was rather a suspect of the Germans, who were always on the look-out, so it was decided that we should pass the night in an empty furnished house of a friend of theirs near by.

Mlle Thuliez, however, stayed with them for the night, and returned to Bellignies the next morning, having successfully brought us on the first stage of our journey.

Having had a meal, and bade farewell to Mlle Thuliez, we were taken across to the empty house by Mlle de Belleville, where we were made quite comfortable, and then locked in for the night.

The next morning, New Year's Eve, Mlle de Belleville came round early, and brought us our breakfast, and later took us again to see M. L'Abbé de Longueville, as had been arranged.

M. L'Abbé now took charge of us, and we went some distance by tram to be lodged with a lady for the remainder of our stay in Brussels.

During the day we were taken to see Dr. Bull, the

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English physician to the King, who was very pleased to see us.

We had a long chat, and had a look at the London *Times*, which he used to get each day, smuggled over the frontier at the cost of 25 francs per copy.

During our stay in Brussels we went about either with our hostess or M. de Longueville, and were struck by the number of German troops about, as they seemed to be everywhere, it apparently being the custom for those on short leave from the front to come back to Brussels.

In the evening we dined at a restaurant with M. de Longueville, and went back to our house to sleep, but were kept awake most of the night by the noisy celebrations of the New Year in the barracks opposite.

The following day, New Year's Day, we went out with Madame to a photographer's to have our photographs taken for identity cards. In order that we should do no talking, Madame told the woman who took our photographs that we were dumb; but I think she saw through this, as we had great difficulty in keeping from laughing through the performance.

Armed with our photographs, we went to see M. de Longueville, who took us down to the Hôtel de Ville and introduced us to the Commissioner of Police, who was very interested in our story.

He, very kindly, and at great risk to himself, provided us with identity papers, in which our descriptions were given, photographs affixed and stamped, and signed by the Commissioner.

Henceforward my name was Jacques Carpentier, born at Mons, and living at Chaussée de Louvain, Brussels, and my trade, a hairdresser, according to my identity card.

In the evening we dined with Dr. Bull, and went off to

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bed early, as we were to leave early in the morning on the final stage of our journey.

The following morning, January 2, M. de Longueville called round for us at about 5 a.m., and we went off with him by tram-car some distance, and on alighting had a short walk to a prearranged rendezvous, where we found a closed waggonette waiting.

There were seven of us altogether, besides the driver – three Belgian gentlemen who wished to get out of the country to Holland, one of whom was going to join the Belgian Army; M. de Longueville and an assistant of his, who was to look after us; Captain Preston and myself.

It had been arranged that we should go as a party from Brussels and drive as near the Dutch frontier as possible, which we hoped to cross somewhere to the north of Antwerp.

At different points on the route already fixed, we were to alight and split up into small parties independent of each other, and proceed on foot.

The waggonette would go on ahead empty, and pick us up again at some spot farther on.

This had been arranged, as *en route* we should pass many examining posts, and it had been found that at certain ones only foot people were stopped, and at others those who were driving; so that we hoped to avoid being stopped by this means if possible.

Fortunately for us all went well on our journey, and we alighted four or five times on the way.

We left Brussels at about 6 a.m., some time before it began to get light, as we had a long way to go, and hoped to reach the frontier in the evening after dark.

Our first stop was to be Malines, which we reached during the middle of the morning, and had to alight and walk several times on the way, and again on entering the town.

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There were a large number of people going in to the town, as it was market-day, and we managed to get through in the crowd without being stopped, although a good number had to show their *laissez-passer*.

Our conveyance had meanwhile gone on to the market-place, where we found it on our arrival, and repaired to a café close at hand for lunch. Having had our meal, we proceeded on again in the waggonette to Antwerp, and again we had to alight once or twice to send the conveyance on, and followed on foot.

On the outskirts of Antwerp we got held up, the sentry posts examining all foot people and also those in tram-cars, which were stopped. We, however, remained inside our conveyance, and after little delay went on, much to our relief.

We drove right into the centre of the city, and pulled up at an hotel.

Here we changed horses, as they had done a long journey and brought us along well, and remained there for an hour or more, as we were before our time, and did not wish to reach the frontier too early.

Leaving the hotel, we proceeded to the docks, where we had to cross the river, and went on foot, sending our conveyance on ahead.

I was with my guide, and approaching a small bridge leading to the docks we were stopped by a sentry, who demanded our papers and to know our business.

Fortunately for us he could speak very little French, and my companion produced his identity papers and then demanded mine.

He did not seem very satisfied nor anxious to let us go on, but my companion tried to explain to him that we both had business there, and wished to see some timber, and after offering him a cigar, which he accepted, he allowed us to pass, much to my relief.

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To keep up our story, we walked on slowly, and examined several large stacks of timber which were near, pulling out large pieces and measuring them with our umbrellas. Gradually getting farther away and out of sight, we followed on for a considerable distance, and eventually picked up our conveyance and found the others waiting.

We then drove on without further incident, and drove to a spot within a mile or so of the frontier. Here we alighted and sent back the waggonette to Antwerp, and were met by a special guide who was by profession a smuggler and, of course, knew every inch of the country.

The final stage was naturally the most difficult, as the Germans wished by all means to prevent any one from getting over to Holland, so to do this, the whole frontier was barbed wired and strongly guarded by sentries and cavalry pickets, and in some parts the wires were electrified.

As it was not quite dark enough on our arrival, we hid for some time in the sand-dunes, and started off at 5 p.m., and followed our guide.

Moving slowly in single file, we went from one dune to another, and waited until the guide went on ahead to reconnoitre and see if the way was clear.

Progressing in this fashion, we eventually arrived within about 200 yards of the barbed-wire fencing which marked the frontier, where we had to hide and wait amongst the bushes, as a patrol was just passing.

When all appeared to be clear, the guide went out and, finding all well, we crawled along on our hands and knees, and got through the wire into Holland and safety, and I shall never forget the feeling of relief, as though a load had been taken off my back, after four and a half months of uncertain life behind the German lines.

The first thing we did was to thank and pay our guide,

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who, as soon as possible, went back across to his home in Belgium, whilst we started off to the nearest village.

We had hardly gone a few yards, however, than we ran into a Dutch sentry, and had visions of being arrested, as he must have known that we had just crossed the frontier.

However, he remained in his sentry-box, and never moved an inch, so we rapidly passed on, and eventually reached a village, where we got our bearings, and went on farther to a larger village, where we were to get a steam-tram which would take us to Bergen.

Finding we had one and a half hours to wait, we went into a café, which was full of Dutch soldiers, and had something to eat and drink, and waited for the train.

Arriving at Bergen, we had to change, and had a short distance to walk to the station, where I purchased some English papers.

We had not long to wait, and got an express train to The Hague, only stopping at Rotterdam. We arrived at The Hague very late, so the first thing we did was to find an hotel, but all appeared to be full.

Tired of going from one to another, we drove out to Scheveninghem, where we got rooms in one of the large hotels.

The first thing we did the next morning was to go to the British Embassy to report our arrival and meet Colonel Dunlop, the Military Attaché, who was very pleased to see us and hear our story, and asked many questions.

We later lunched with M. L'Abbé de Longueville, and afterwards went round to the Belgian Embassy to see Prince de Ligne, a relation of Prince Reginald, and it was arranged that he should send the news back by letter to Bellignies that we had got through, saying that the parcels had arrived safely.

The British Embassy had quickly made arrangements

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for us to go back to England, so we were enabled to start the same night (January 3) for Flushing.

Leaving The Hague that night with M. de Longueville, we reached Flushing rather late, and after thanking and saying good-bye to M. L'Abbé de Longueville, we went on board the s.s. *Mecklenberg*, and sent a telegram off to my mother and father, asking them to meet me in London the following day.

Securing two berths, we passed the night on board, the boat leaving early the following morning (January 4).

Very glad we were to see the white cliffs of England appearing through the mist during the afternoon, and at about 4 o'clock we landed at Folkestone.

An army leave-boat arrived shortly afterwards, and whilst waiting for the train, I met two men of my regiment who had just crossed by it.

They did not recognise me, however, until I spoke to them, nor did my mother and father, who had come to meet me at Victoria Station – the result being that I did not meet them until an hour afterwards at the Hotel Metropole.

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APPENDIX III

ENGLISH DECORATIONS

Name.	*Decoration.*	*London Gazette.*
Lieut.-Colonel H. W. Wilberforce .	C.B.	18/2/15.
Lieut.-Colonel A. Lawson . .	C.M.G.	14/1/16.
Major G. H. A. Ing . . .	D.S.O.	6/15.
	Bar to D.S.O.	31/8/18.
Major M. C. C. Pinching . .	D.S.O.	14/1/16.
Lieutenent A. J. R. Lamb . .	D.S.O.	A.R.O. 120 of 23/9/14.
Major A. E. W. Harman . .	D.S.O.	3/6/16.
Major (T. Lieut.-Colonel) B. H. H. Matthew Lannowe	D.S.O.	*L.G.* Special Supp. d/23/11/16.
Captain H. W. Hall . . .	M.C.	23/6/15.
Second Lieutenant F. Milnes .	M.C.	23/6/15.
Second Lieutenant J. J. Kingstone .	M.C.	14/1/16.
Second Lieutenant H. Misa . .	M.C.	14/1/16.
Lieutenant W. H. Tapp . .	M.C.	29/10/15.
Captain F. A. Single . . .	M.C.	1/1/17.
Lieutenant R. T. Barnard . .	M.C.	7/12/17.
Lieutenant F. E. Knight . .	M.C.	26/4/18.
Lieutenant W. V. Schwier (Essex Yeomanry)	M.C.	28/4/18.
Lieutenant P. G. Hamlin, R.A.M.C. (U.S.A.)	M.C.	9/5/18.
Captain F. H. Whitmore Smith .	M.C.	King's Birthday.
A/Captain Sir C. B. W. Magnay, Bart.	M.C.	15/10/18.
Second Lieutenant A. J. Cockrill (Essex Yeomanry) . . .	M.C.	"
Second Lieutenant L. Solaire (Essex Yeomanry)	M.C.	"
Second Lieutenant T. Carabine (Yorkshire Dragoons) . .	M.C.	9/9/18.
Lieutenant G. H. D. Ascoli . .	M.C.	New Honours, *Gazette*, 1919.
Lieutenant R. A. Grosvenor (with R.F.C.)	M.C.	26/7/18.
	Bar.	16/9/18.
Captain B. A. McGuire, R.A.V.C.	O.B.E.	New Honours, *Gazette*, 1919.

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ENGLISH DECORATIONS—*continued.*

Name.	*Decoration.*	*London Gazette*
Captain C. A. Heydeman . .	M.C. Bar to M.C.	31/12/18.
T/Captain F. D. R. Milne . .	M.C.	26/7/18.

FOREIGN DECORATIONS

Name.	*Decoration.*	*London Gazette.*
Lieut.-Colonel H. W. Wilberforce	Croix d'Officier, L. of H.	11/10/14.
Major A. E. W. Harman . .	„	24/2/16.
Major-General A. E. W. Harman	Croix de Commandeur, L. of H.	11/3/19.
Lieutenant C. A. Heydeman .	Croix de Chevalier, L. of H.	11/10/14.
Lieutenant A. J. R. Lamb . .	„	„
Major M. C. C. Pinching . .	Croix de Guerre	1/5/17.
Captain H. W. Hall . . .	„	„
Major-General A. E. W. Harman	„	10/10/18.

Major B. H. H. Matthew-Lannowe (att. Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders): Serbian Order of White Eagle, 4th Class, with Swords 15/2/17.

OTHER RANKS

French.	*Decoration.*	*London Gazette.*
Corporal Short . . .	Medaille Militaire	5/8/14.
Q.M.S. E. A. Hire . . .	„	24/2/16.
R.S.M. G. W. F. Smith . .	„	24/2/16.
Sergeant L. Parker . . .	„	1/5/17.
Belgium.		
Sergeant G. Wardroper . .	Belgian Decoration Militaire	1/8/17.
D/4644 Private Mitchell . .	Croix de Guerre	31/1/18.
Corporal F. Curtis . . .	„	31/1/18.
Russian.		
S.S.M. C. C. Wallace . .	Cross of the Order of St. George (4th Class)	August, 1915.
Private J. Goddard . .	Medal of St. George (4th Class)	„

OTHER RANKS

DISTINGUISHED CONDUCT MEDAL

Name.	*London Gazette.*
A/S.S.M. J. A. Fraser	16/1/15.
S.S.M. A. F. Coss	2/6/15.
Private J. Goodchild	2/6/15.
4986 A/Corporal J. J. Clarke	5/8/15.

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APPENDIX III

DISTINGUISHED CONDUCT MEDAL—*continued*

Name.	*London Gazette.*
Sergeant R. J. Chelmsford	1/1/16.
L/Corporal R. Ward	1/1/16.
Private F. W. Ellicock	26/10/14.
Corporal (A/Sergeant) T. G. Jackson	3/6/16
R.S.M. G. W. F. Smith	14/1/18.
Sergeant J. Fishwick	28/4/18.
A/L.S.M. J. Bird	3/6/18.
Sergeant A. Spain	15/10/18.
Sergeant A. Ford	15/10/18.
Corporal W. Bodman	15/10/18.
Sergeant A. Sprake (Essex Yeomanry)	27/6/18.

MILITARY MEDAL

Name.	*London Gazette*
L/Corporal W. V. Clements (att. M.M.P.)	3/6/16.
Sergeant F. Barber	,,
L/Corporal H. P. F. Charnock	,,
Sergeant R. D. Elliott	,, Bar, 16/8/18.
L/Corporal F. W. Fisher	11/10/16.
Sergeant J. Iles	,,
L/Corporal J. J. Jagger	,,
Corporal F. Mitchem	,,
A/Sergeant A. Murray	,,
A/Sergeant L. Parker	,,
Private T. Sanders	,,
Corporal T. Scott	,,
S.S.M. C. C. Wallace	,,
L/Corporal R. Biggadike	26/3/17.
Sergeant R. Ballard	28/11/17.
Sergeant E. Evans	,,
Corporal E.Tennant	,,
L/Corporal W. Allanson	,,
Private H. Magnet	,,
Sergeant W. Fowler	14/3/18.
L/Corporal F. Tomkins	,,
L/Corporal R. Percy	,,
Private W. Horne	,,
Sergeant G. Clarke	19/4/18.
Corporal G. Stevens	,,
L/Corporal F. Potten	,,

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MILITARY MEDAL—*continued.*

Name.	*London Gazette.*
L/Corporal H. Stevenson	19/4/18.
Private C. Rees	"
Corporal W. Chamberlain	"
Sergeant A. Whitelock	16/8/18.
L/Sergeant F. Curtis	"
Corporal W. Mills	"
Corporal R. Pottle	"
L/Corporal J. Smith	" Bar, 24/1/19.
Private R. Richards	16/8/18.
Private E. Burkeg	"
Private J. Jackson	"
Private M. Bingham	"
Private F. Wood	"
M. de Logis Boulay, R.A. (Interpreter)	14/10/17.
Private F. Levey (Essex Yeomanry)	16/8/18.
Private J. Welborne	"
Private W. Wilkinson	"
Private D. Perry	"
Private E. Knox	"

MERITORIOUS SERVICE MEDAL

Name.	*London Gazette.*
Corporal S. Billyeald Private R. Allen Private G. F. Scott L/Corporal E. Bibby (att. M.M.P.)	Under authority granted by His Majesty the King, awarded by the G.O.C.-in-Chief. For attempting to save life from drowning. 1/1/17.
F.Q.M.S. E. Marriott	18/1/19.
Supt. Clerk E. A. Hire	"
Corporal (A/Sergeant) D. E. Taylor (att. 1st Cavalry Brigade)	17/6/18.
Corporal W. White (Headquarters, 16th Division)	1918 (New Year Honours).
Sergeant Sutton (M.M.P.)	18/10/16.
Sergeant C. F. Miller (28th Division, Salonika F.F.)	26/6/17.

MENTION IN DISPATCHES

Name.	*London Gazette.*
Lieut.-Colonel H. W. Wilberforce	9/12/14, 15/6/16, 15/5/17, 20/5/18.
Major G. H. A. Ing	9/12/14, 27/1/16.

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APPENDIX III

MENTION IN DISPATCHES—*continued.*

Name.	*London Gazette.*
Captain E. S. Chance	9/12/14, 11/12/17.
Lieutenant G. N. Champion de Crespigny	9/12/14.
Lieutenant C. A. Heydeman	9/12/14.
Lieutenant A. J. R. Lamb	9/12/14.
Captain H. W. Hall	14/1/15, 22/6/15, 20/5/18.
Lieutenant G. Sartorius (I.A. attd.)	14/2/15.
Major J. A. Browning	22/6/15.
Captain A. D. Stone	,,
Second Lieutenant H. Misa	22/6/15, 1/1/16.
Second Lieutenant F. Milnes	22/6/15.
Lieut.-Colonel A. Lawson	8/10/14; Spec. 1/1/16.
Major A. E. W. Harman	14/1/16, 15/6/16.
Major M. C. C. Pinching	14/1/16.
Lieutenant W. H. Tapp	1/1/16.
Second Lieutenant J. J. Kingstone	1/1/16.
Lieutenant E. D. Fanshawe	15/6/16.
Lieutenant G. A. Moore	15/6/16.
Quartermaster Major H. Boag	15/6/16.
Lieutenant R. G. M. Yeatherd	15/5/17.
Lieutenant R. T. Barnard	11/12/17.
Lieutenant K. F. Sackville-West Lieutenant A. J. K. Todd	King's Birthday Honours, 1918
Lieut.-Colonel G. H. Ahy, D.S.O.	18/1/19.
Captain W. G. Higgins	,,
Captain H. F. Sackville-West	,,
Captain B. A. M'Guire, R.A.V.C.	,,
T/Lieut.-Colonel B. H. H. Matthew Lannowe	25/9/16.
T/Captain F. Sutherland	4/1/17.
Brigadier-General A. E. W. Harman	4/1/17, 20/5/18.
Captain E. Stone	20/5/18.

OTHER RANKS

Name.	*London Gazette.*
Sergeant J. A. Fraser	9/12/14.
L/Corporal R. Jarvis	,,
Private W. Bryant	,,
L/Sergeant F. J. Webb	,,
A/Corporal G. W. Short	,,
Private J. Goodchild	,,
Private C. P. Horne	,,
Private F. W. Ellicock	,,
Sergeant C. C. Wallace	January, 1915.

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MENTION IN DISPATCHES—*continued.*

OTHER RANKS

Name.	*London Gazette.*
A/Sergeant R. J. Chamberlain	22/6/15.
Private J. Jagger	,,
Q.M.S. E. A. Hire	1/1/16.
L/Sergeant L. Parker	,,
L/Corporal A. Langley	,,
L/Corporal Biggadike	,,
R.Q.M.S. J. Bird	15/5/17.
S.S.M. (A/R.S.M.) E. S. Parke	,,
F.Q.M.S. E. Marriott	11/12/17.
Corporal W. White (Headquarters, 16th Division)	20/12/18.

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CASUALTIES FROM AUGUST 1914 TO APRIL 1918.

	Officers.				Other Ranks.					
	Killed.	Died of Wounds.	Wounded.	Total.	Killed.	Died of Wounds.	Wounded.	Other.	Total.	Totals.
Aug. to Dec. 1914 .	4	1	11	16	43	7	102	24	176	192
1915 . . .	1	–	1	2	31	4	56	2	93	95
1916 . . .	2	–	2	4	12	3	33	3	51	55
1917 . . .	–	–	8	8	4	7	50	1	62	70
1918 . . .	2	1	6	9	20	12	120	4	156	165
Total . .	9	2	28	39	110	33	361	34	538	577

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